

ST. NICHOLAS.

VOL. XXX.

DECEMBER, 1902.

NO. 2.

A CHRISTMAS MISTAKE.

BY EDWIN L. SABIN.



OLD Santa Claus one morning was trying to peruse —
Though in a tearing hurry — his "Weekly Iceberg News,"
And the name of Santos-Dumont that moment caught his eye,
The well known navigator of machines that soar on high.
"Why, bless me!" muttered Santa. "A cousin, sure enough;
Our family, I notice, is always up to snuff!
The name 's misspelled. These papers! They seldom get
things right!"
And he sent off for an air-ship that very selfsame night.

A month or so of waiting; and then it came apace
Upon a fast Dog-Special to Twenty North Pole Place;
And, just as pleased as ever was any girl or boy,
Now Santa Claus his treasure surveyed with chuckling joy.

He scorned his heartsick reindeer, who vainly pawed the snow;
He scorned his shining "auto" he 'd bought a year ago;
And after ardent practice, all loaded like a wain,
Behold upon its journey long his brimming aëroplane!

It southward sped, and southward, above the frozen world;
The rudder acted nicely, the twin propellers whirled;
The route was unobstructed (no hills, you know, to climb),
The motion was entrancing, the ether free from grime;
And Santa Claus was overjoyed to have so fine a trip —
When suddenly a cat-fit appeared to seize that ship!
It canted, swooped, and wobbled; it veered from side to side!
Oh, never Santos-Dumont had such an awful ride!

Copyright, 1902, by THE CENTURY CO. All rights reserved.

This happened o'er a city — and lo, the air was filled
 With presents scattered broadcast, from out the air-ship spilled;
 And into gaping chimneys of children who were bad
 Fell toys and gifts unnumbered they ought n't to have had!



"AND SANTA CLAUS WAS OVERJOYED TO HAVE SO FINE A TRIP." (SEE PAGE 99.)

And into patient chimneys of children who were good
 Fell naught at all, or possibly some bits of splintered wood!
 The children bad were boastful, the children good were grieved,
 And Santa Claus was frantic that folks were so deceived.

So, naughty, naughty youngsters with gifts on Christmas day,
 Don't think that Santa's plans for you were meant to end that way;
 And you, the lads and lasses who tried to do just right,
 And on Christmas day imagined that you received a slight,



Please picture how it came to pass in spite of Christmas laws,
And much against the purpose of poor old Santa Claus;
And such a dreadful mix-up will ne'er take place again.
"FOR SALE (S. Claus the owner): one large new aëroplane!"



THE STORY OF KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS.*

BY HOWARD PYLE.



CHAPTER III.

HOW ARTHUR KNEW HIMSELF.

So when Arthur leaped once more over the barriers of the tournament field, bearing with him the wonderful Sword wrapped in his mantle, there was Sir Kay still tracing up and down in his fury, whilst the combat still thundered and smoked in the midst of the plain. To him ran Arthur in all haste, crying: "Brother! Brother! Lo! here is a new sword I have gotten for thee!" Wherewith he flung aside the folds of his cloak and offered the glove by the blade to Sir Kay.

Bright flashed that strange Sword in the sunlight. Bright it flashed with a dazzling splendor. Bright it flashed with glory in the eyes of Sir Kay.

And the sight of that Sword smote him dumb and motionless upon the instant. For well he knew what Sword it was that Arthur had brought for him; and well he knew what it meant to be the owner of that marvelous weapon. Up he rose in his stirrups with stiffen-

ing knees, and tight gripped he the horn of his jousting-saddle.

Meantime stood young Arthur, all bemazed at his brother's strange aspect, yet still holding the Sword toward him for his taking.

Then presently Sir Kay cried out aloud, "Where gottest thou that Sword?" And then again, "Where gottest thou that Sword?"

"Brother, what ails thee?" cried Arthur, "that thou lookest upon me so strangely? I will tell thee all. Upon my way to our father's pavilion I met that old man whom men do call Merlin the Wise. He stayed me in my running, and bade me not take so long a journey for a weapon for thee to fight withal, but to fetch for thee the Sword from the Anvil upon the marble cube before the cathedral. Accordingly I did his command, and lo! here is the Sword for thee."

Then the thought raced like a flash through the mind of Sir Kay: "Behold, then! this Sword must be for me, if so be Merlin bade my brother fetch it to me. For have I not proved myself worthy this day of high estate? Have I not

* Copyrighted, 1902, by Howard Pyle. All rights reserved.

overthrown and cast down seven of the best approved knights of Britain? Have I not shown myself to be the best knight of my age in this land? Behold, then, this Sword must be for me, and haply I am he who is to be king of all this great and glorious realm." Therewith immediately the wonder of this thought so expanded within his bosom that he felt as though his heart would burst asunder. His brain swam like air, and he was fain to hold tight to his charger's mane lest he should fall to the ground. Then presently his wits came back to him again like birds from the sky, and he called aloud: "Cover it again in thy cloak, and that upon the instant, and let no man see what thou hast."

Then Arthur cried out in great wonder: "What are these words thou sayest, Kay? Wilt thou fight no more?" But Kay answered not, but shook his head in reply. Whereupon, turning to one of the attendants, he bade the fellow to haste to Sir Ector where he sat at the lists, and to beseech of him that he would presently come to the pavilion with all expedition, for that he had monstrous news to acquaint him withal. Therewith, giving young Arthur his hand, he lifted the youth up to a seat behind him upon the horse's back, and then, turning, he quitted the field of tourney without deigning so much as to turn his head to behold again that place whereon he had got himself so much glory that day.

Now when Sir Ector came hurrying to his pavilion, he beheld Sir Kay striding up and down, disturbed with a great ferment of spirits, the while sat Arthur, looking at his brother and wondering what all the mystery meant. When Sir Ector entered, Sir Kay ran to him crying: "Father, father! Behold what a wonderful thing hath happened!" Thereupon, holding Sir Ector by the hand, he drew his father to a table that stood in the midst of the pavilion, and throwing aside the cloak that lay upon it—lo! there lay that marvelous Sword, all shining and glistening in its splendor. "Father, father!" cried Kay, as in an agony of spirit. "Behold this Sword! It is mine! What else may it foretell than that I am to be king of all this land? Oh, father, speak! Is this to be?"

Then in an instant Sir Ector the Trustworthy's face fell all white like the color of unbroken ashes upon the hearth. No word said he for a long time, but only gazed upon the Sword like one who has been stricken to the heart with some great wonder. Then, finding his voice, he three times called aloud: "What is this! What is this! What is this!" Then, turning to Sir Kay: "Where gat ye this Sword?" he commanded.

"What matters that?" cried Sir Kay. "This I can assure thee: the Sword is mine own. Doth it not therefore signify that I am to be king of all this land?"

But Sir Ector replied not. "Where gat ye this Sword?" he commanded. "I charge thee upon thy fealty to tell me upon the instant."

At this command Sir Kay fell a-trembling. "Father," cried he, "I will tell thee sooth. As thou knowest, I brake my sword in the tourney, and so sent my brother to fetch another in its stead. Presently thereafter he returned, bringing me this, saying that Merlin had sent it to me for mine own."

Then Sir Ector, still with a face as pale as ashes, turned to young Arthur where he sat. "Where gat ye that Sword?" he commanded.

Then Arthur arose and stood before his father and confessed all to him: how he had gone for a sword for his brother Kay; how Merlin had stayed him and commanded him to draw forth the Glave that stood in the Anvil; how Sir Ulfius checked him not; how he had drawn forth the Sword, and at Merlin's bidding had carried it forthwith to his brother Kay. To all this listened Sir Ector, saying naught, but only gazing steadfastly the while at Arthur. Then, when the youth had ended, Sir Ector wrapped the mystic blade in the mantle with great care, and, bidding Sir Kay and Arthur to follow him, turned and quitted the pavilion.

And a sorrowful young knight, I wot, was Sir Kay; for now straightway he felt within him that all the high hopes that had so late expanded his bosom had, of a sudden, vanished as vanishes a bubble when pierced by a poniard. He was like one who, as it were, had of a sudden flown for a little upon wings in the pure air, only to fall from a great height and to be dashed against the earth. There-

fore, speechless and with bowed head, he followed his father, walking beside young Arthur.

Meantime, with white face and fixed and staring eyes, Sir Ector, with the Sword wrapped in the mantle, led the way, the two youths following him, and thus came, at last, to where stood the cube of marble stone and the Anvil (now empty of its Sword) before the great door of the cathedral. No one did they find thereat, for now even Sir Ulfius, who had stood upon guard, had vanished. But without pause Sir Ector unwrapped the Sword from the mantle and handed it to young Arthur. "Thou sayest," quoth he, in a strange and hollow voice, "that thou didst draw this Sword forth from that Anvil. Let me, with mine own eyes, behold thee thrust it back again; then will I believe."

Then Arthur beheld that the face of the Anvil was as smooth and unbroken as though no blade had pierced its heart. "Alas!" cried he, "how may I perform so great a miracle as that—to thrust a sword-blade into solid iron?"

"Nevertheless," said Sir Ector, in the same strange voice, "that miracle thou must assay; for no greater miracle will it be, I wot, than the miracle thou hast performed in drawing it out thence."

Then Arthur was troubled in spirit, for he thought, because of the strangeness of Sir Ector's voice and aspect, that his father was angered with him. "Alas, my father," he cried, "be not wroth with me. Command whatsoever thou wilt and I will assay it, even to undertaking so strange a thing as this."

Therewith, taking the Sword into his hands, he leaped upon the block of marble stone. He set the point of the blade upon the face of the Anvil, and bore with his weight strongly upon the haft thereof. Smoothly and slowly slid the blade into the heart of the iron, until it stood midway buried therein; thereupon it remained fast held. Then lightly Arthur leaped down again from the stone cube, leaving the Sword where it stood in the Anvil.

But when Sir Ector beheld the miracle that Arthur had performed, he fell a-trembling in every limb. "Kneel down, my son!" he cried out to Kay, in a loud voice. "Kneel down! for, behold, before us, of a surety, stands the

true King of Britain." Thereupon, catching Kay by the belt, whence hung the scabbard empty of its sword, Sir Ector dragged him, all bemazed, down beside him, so that they both knelt, side by side, before young Arthur.

"Alas!" cried Arthur, "what is this thou doest? Why dost thou, mine own father, kneel down before me? And why does my brother Kay kneel before me?"

"Now must I tell the very truth," said Sir Ector, the whiles he still knelt upon the earth before young Arthur, "and this it is: Thou art, indeed, no son of mine. And now, plainly, hath come the time for to confess the same. This is the true story of thy birth, so far as I may know it. Eighteen years ago one came to me bearing the signet-ring of King Uther Pendragon, which, delivering unto me, he commanded that at midnight of an assigned day I should be at a certain place whereof he told me, and that was the postern of King Uther Pendragon's castle at Carlion. Thither I went, and whilst I stood there, there came to me two men, one of whom bare in his arms a young child wrapped in a fine cloth of scarlet dye. Showing to me the king's seal, these two men bade me, as my title name was of one worthy of trust, that I should take this young child, whose name should be Arthur, and that I should rear it as mine own, letting no man wist otherwise than it was mine own child. This have I done so faithfully that neither thou, nor thy foster-brother Kay, nor any man in the world has ever thought otherwise than that thou wast mine own flesh and blood. Nor did my lady wife ever betray the secret to a living soul, but bore it to the grave with her in silence. Wherefore do I and thy foster-brother kneel to thee; for now, surely, I perceive that there is in thy blood that which is certainly of no common strain."

But at this story young Arthur had fallen a-weeping, so that the tears coursed down his cheeks in streams. "Alas! my father," cried he, "what is this thou tellest me? Alas! what would be kinghood to me an I were to lose thee and my brother Kay? Oh, tell me, my father, that thou art but amusing me with this strange and wonderful fable!"

"Nay," said Sir Ector; "I tell thee sooth.

Sir Kay showeth the mystic
Sword unto Sir Ector. *TT*



And now I know that surely thou art a young eagle of kingly blood, and that the miracle that thou hast done bodes that thou shalt be King of Britain. Wherefore, my dear lord, it is meet that Kay and I should kneel to thee in this dawn of thy great glory."

"But," cried Arthur, still weeping, "if I lose thee, my father, and if I lose my brother Kay, whom then shall I have? and who am I that am left alone in the world?"

"That can I tell thee," said a great voice close at hand.

The three turned upon the instant, and, behold! there stood Merlin the Wise and Sir Ulfus the Steadfast beside him, and it was Merlin who spake. For all this time, by means of Merlin's magic, they two had been standing beside the three, but quite invisible to them. "That can I tell thee," said Merlin, speaking again, "for now hath come the hour, and this is it; and now is come the man, and thou art he! Know, Arthur, that thy father was Uther Pendragon himself, and thy mother was Queen Igrayne, his wife. Thou art King Uther's only son, and likewise the only child of his blood in all the world. Now at the time when thou wast born, I, by my power of foretelling that which is to happen, came to know that King Uther Pendragon was not very long to live in this world. Wherefore, fearing that his enemies might take so young and tender a child as thou wert, for to keep him prisoner or else to slay him for his inheritance, I did advise King Uther that thou shouldst straightway be conveyed away into a place of safety, and given into the keeping of one who should be most worthy of trust in all the land, and who should likewise be of such estate and quality as to uprear thee as the son of a king should be bred. This man was Sir Ector, thy foster-father. To my advice King Uther lent an ear, and so Sir Ulfus the Steadfast and I gave thee into the keeping of Sir Ector the Trustworthy, as he hath told thee. Ever since that time have we watched over thee in secret, until now thine hour is come. Let the Sword stand where thou hast thrust it, and on Christmas day we will so contrive it that thy kingdom shall be achieved before all the world."

"But, my father!" cried Arthur, as one in

despair, for he was passing young and of a loving spirit. "Have I, then, lost my father? And have I lost my brother Kay?"

"Nay, look thou forward," said Merlin, "and not behind. Grieve not for that which hath gone. That which is past is past and done, and can never be brought to happen again. That which lieth before thee is yet to be lived. Once thou wert a boy; now thou art a man; and though the crown of thy manhood may sometime, haply, ache thee, yet must thou wear it to the end."

Thereupon Sir Ector, as he still knelt, caught Arthur by the hand. "Surely," he cried, "this is the perfect truth, and thou art indeed my lord and my king. But likewise art thou mine own dear son; wherefore do I now crave a boon of thee?"

"And dost thou crave a boon of me," said Arthur, "who, an thou ask it, may have anything that is mine to give—even an it were mine own life? And dost thou crave a boon of me? Ask what thou wilt; it is thine, my father."

"Then my boon is this," said Sir Ector: "that when thou art king thou wilt appoint thy brother Kay as the seneschal of all thy kingdom."

"That shall I do as thou dost ask," said Arthur; "and so shall he be, not a seneschal, but a brother to me always—and so shalt thou always be a father to me as long as thou and I shall live."

"And thou," said Sir Ector, again, "shalt be not more my king and lord than mine own dear son."

But all this while Sir Kay said nothing; but so stricken and amazed was he by all that had happened in that hour past that he wist not well whether the very life he lived were real or whether it were not rather some fantastic vision of his brain. Wherefore he could find not a word to say, but knelt in silence.

Then up and spake Merlin the Wise: "And now, Sir Ector, thou trustworthy knight who hath proven thyself so worthy of trust, take thou home with thee this young man; consider him henceforth, not as thy son, but as thy king. Guard thou him well, for in him is the middle jewel of all this kingdom. Upon Christmas

morn, Sir Ulfus the Steadfast and I will come to thy pavilion, and then, together, we will bring him before the eyes of all. Then shall he assay before the world this venture which he hath accomplished to-day thus privily. Then shall all men behold him to be King of Britain, and that day, haply, shall dawn a glory that shall never die."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE KINGS ASSAYED THE ADVENTURE OF THE SWORD.

AND NOW, at last, was come that great day when the King of all Britain was to be chosen by assay of the adventure that Merlin had set to that end. Bright shone the sun, glorious and radiant in its winter sky. Cold blew the wind and free. All the crooked streets were full of folk, and the sound of the restless multitude was like the vast humming of a monstrous hive of bees that, in warm and happy Junetime, swarm to the choosing of a queen. For so it was that the folk swarmed to that place where a King of Britain was to be chosen that day.

Meantime the mystic Sword, firm set in the Anvil, shining with as glittering a splendor as though no hand had touched it to tarnish its virgin brightness, abided the coming of that one who should draw it forth, safeguarded, the while, by the knights who had been set there for that purpose. Neither did any man in all the world—saving only Arthur and those four who had been with him—know aught of what had been done and of what had been achieved, for all supposed that the blade had forever remained where Merlin had at first planted it.

So all the people (unknowing what had already happened) talked of the coming trial, each man choosing for himself a king whom he thought would be the fittest to rule the land. Some there were who held that the great King Leodegrance of Camilard would be the fortunate one in the assay—because that he was so strong a king, and because he was lord of the famous Round Table. Others maintained that King Lot of Lothian and the Isles or King Uriens of Gore would be chosen in the

assay, because that these two had each married a daughter of Queen Igrayne and a foster-daughter of King Uther Pendragon—to wit, the one had wedded Queen Margaise and the other had wedded Queen Morgana le Fay. So, this Christmas morn, all the folk talked and debated among themselves, some upholding the fame of this king and some the fame of that, the whiles all the multitude moved in one direction, and that toward the great cathedral, the cube of marble stone, the Anvil and the Sword.

And now I must tell you that over these mystic things a great canopy of many colors had been spread, covering nigh an acre of ground and sheltering from the intemperature of the weather all that space circumadjacent to the cathedral. This canopy had been embroidered withal with strange devices of lions and dragons and angels and beautiful figures, so that, when the sun shone on it, it glowed with a thousand colors of different dyes and lusters. Under this canopy and nigh the marble cube had been erected sundry stalls for the courts of the kings and of the dukes of counties who were to make assay of this great adventure. Certain of these stalls were adorned with carved and gilded figures, and all were hung with cunningly embroidered tapestries or with finely woven cloth of gold, so that, what with the sunlight shining upon that many-colored canopy; what with the flashing of ten thousand jewels; what with the waving of plumes and the fluttering of cloth of gold, of satins, and of velvets; the thought can scarce conceive of the beauty and the glory of that marvelous spectacle.

Betwixt the stalls that stood thus upon the right hand and upon the left, there stretched a lane or alleyway spread with a rich carpet of crimson velvet. This alleyway led direct from the distant gate of the court to the cube of marble stone and the Anvil, transfixed with the shining Sword. Here had a flight of steps been builded, so that each contestant might the more easily reach the assigned place when he should attempt to draw forth the mystic blade. Over beyond this spot and seated in a great arched space where should have been the door of the cathedral (albeit it was now

all hung with tapestries and broideries symbolizing the high and holy estate of the Lord Archbishop) sat the archbishop himself in all his pomp. Around him sat the high dignitaries of the church, and surrounding these were assembled the knights of the archepiscopal household, all clad in shining armor and with trappings of white samite.

Surrounding all these courts of kings and dukes, archbishop and bishops, were great tiers and circles of seats whereon were to sit the lesser nobility and those of quality who were to be present at the choosing of the King of Britain. In the center of all was the mystic Sword, thrust deep into the Anvil, and toward it was the observance of all that great multitude fixed, and toward it was every thought directed.

So have I told you the circumstances of that great occasion, the like of which Britain had, haply, never seen before, and which it will, haply, ne'er behold again.

Meantime a great humming and murmur filled the air: a sound like the sound of a coming storm that drives the sea before it into the clefts and caves of some rocky headland; the humming and the murmur of a hundred thousand voices talking together. For now the time had come, and all waited to behold who would first venture this great assay for kinghood.

Thus with waiting, the morning had passed half away when, of a sudden, athwart this vast hum of many voices there cut, clean and clear, the sound of a single trumpet, and thereupon all those present wotted that the first of the contestants was at hand.

A great movement immediately stirred the entire throng, and every face, as one, was turned toward the extremity of the alleyway, the whiles a great silence fell, as still as death, upon all that vast crowd of waiting folk.

Then of a sudden the gates at the extremity of the court were swung open, and the sunlight fell glittering upon the polished armor of a company of knights who entered thereat. Behind these knights there appeared sundry heralds, clad in cloth of gold. Behind these, again, there entered a court of noble lords, who gathered about a center space where walked the kingly one who was to make the first assay.

Nor might any man see at once who he was, though all strove mightily to behold him, so that a great rustle and tumult swept throughout the whole multitude as one might see the wind suddenly sweep through a waving field of ripening corn.

Six heralds in all there were behind the armed knights, and these set their trumpets to their lips and blew a blast right musically as that noble company of knights, heralds, and lords moved forward in slow, sedate advance.

So, reaching an open space midway the lane, the company presently halted and divided upon either side, and thereupon there stepped forth King Leodegrance of Camilard in all his majesty. Upon his right hand stood a knight clad all in full and shining armor and with his vizor closed, which same was for to act as his champion against any who might oppose the righteousness of his claim. Upon his left hand came a herald clad all in cloth of gold and wearing a tabard embroidered with the coat of arms of his royal master,—to wit, a beautiful lady resting her hand upon the head of a crouching lion,—he to announce King Leodegrance's just and lawful claims to the right of assay. Behind King Leodegrance came two fair young pages upholding the hem of the ermine-lined robe that hung from his shoulders.

So came King Leodegrance forward to that assay, walking one pace ahead of his attendants,—a tall and noble figure, proud and haughty,—his gaze set straight before him as though he saw naught and recked naught of all that huge multitude of common men and women gazing down upon him. And at his coming a great roar of acclaim arose to the skies—the loud acclaim of a hundred thousand voices shouting in unison; for, to every hair, Leodegrance looked a king, and one right well fit to rule over a great and glorious nation.

So came he forward, clad all in purple and gold, his purple and ermine-lined robe studded all over with golden bees. Upon his bosom hung a massive collar of gold, flashing with a great number of gems of various sorts, and upon his head he wore the golden crown of kinghood, that well became his stern and grizzled brows and his high and royal bearing. For, whether he might win in this adventure, or whether he

King Leodegrance cometh to
the assay of the Sword. &



should fail, yet was he still a great and haughty king within his own just right and power.

Slowly and in stately court did he advance until he had mounted the steps that led unto the Anvil, and so had come over against where the archbishop sat upon his throne. Here he halted whiles the herald advanced and in a loud voice announced his titles and his degree, setting forth to all near that the armed knight (who was Sir Rayence de Côte d'Or) was King Leodegrance's champion, to defend his claims against attain.

Then, when the herald had ended his proclamation, the Lord Archbishop arose from his throne and came seven paces forward to welcome the royal assayant of this adventure. "King Leodegrance," quoth he, "right glad am I to see your Majesty thus venture this great assay! Who is there in all the world who hath not heard of your high fame, and who is there who holdeth you not in honor? So may God be with you to do your endeavor in that which you have undertaken—whereof, should you fail, there shall no dishonor follow, and wherein, should you succeed, all men will certainly rejoice that one so high in estate shall have been chosen of Heaven to be overlord and king of this realm. So go you forth in God's peace to your adventure."

So spake the archbishop with great courtesy and gentleness.

To this address King Leodegrance made no reply, but, turning in stately silence, he slowly ascended the short flight of steps that led to the Anvil and the shining Sword; whereupon a silence as mute as that of the grave fell upon all that vast assembly of beholders.

Thrice made King Leodegrance the attempt to draw forth the shining blade, bending each sinew strongly to the assay. His face waxed blood-red to the forehead as he tugged thereat, and the great veins stood forth upon his temples like whip-cords. And still all that great multitude sat watching in silence so deep that you might have heard a silver groat fall upon the earth from a man's hand. Thrice strove King Leodegrance with might and main; but even at the first assay all those present beheld that he was surely not the one for to be chosen king that day. For the mystic Sword moved within

its bed not so much as the breadth of a single hair.

Then King Leodegrance likewise beheld that he had failed, and thereupon, after the third trial, he presently ceased from his endeavor. For a while he stood with bowed head as though he would assay once more, and yet he assayed not. Nor might any man in all the world know in what manner he communed within himself for that short while; for his hopes had been passing high, looking to this accomplishment, and now he wotted right well that he was not the one chosen to be king. Then, at last, he turned him about, and slowly and with bowed head descended before all those who gazed upon him—for it is passing hard, I wot, for any man to stand confessed before all the world that he is less great and less worthy than he hath adjudged himself to be.

So, slowly moved he away from that place, gathering about him his court of knights, heralds, and lords in waiting, and thus quitted that spot where he had failed before all those princely and noble folk who had beheld him make the attempt for his high and kingly honors.

And as he departed, wrapped in the silence of his kingly pride, a great murmur of question and of wonder arose from all; for all men marveled that if King Leodegrance had thus failed to draw forth the Sword, even to the breadth of a barley straw, who of all men there present might hope to succeed in releasing it from its embedment?

Now after King Leodegrance had thus striven and failed, and after he had departed thence, there by and by burst forth another sound of trumpets blowing, and forth there came King Lot of Lothian and Orkney to make assay in the same wise as King Leodegrance had done. This proud king came in even greater estate than King Leodegrance of Camilard; for two goodly sons, who were afterward famous knights (to wit, Sir Gawaine and Sir Geherris), followed him as pages, and seven-and-thirty knights of high degree and lusty fame surrounded him as escort. And when he appeared all the folk shouted again right mightily, for he stood high in favor of all, because he had taken for his queen that Margaise who had been King Uther Pendragon's

foster-daughter, wherefore he seemed to stand as of kin to that great king.

Him also the archbishop greeted and made welcome to the assay, whereunto, when he had come, he strove full seven times, tugging and tugging amain ere he stinted from his striving.

But neither could he budge the blade a hair's breadth.

And after King Lot followed his brother-in-law, King Uriens of Gore, who had married that other half-daughter of King Uther Pendragon, the famous enchantress, Morgana le Fay. But he also failed to move the Glave.

Then after King Uriens of Gore, there followed King Fion of Scotland; and after King Fion, there followed King Mark of Cornwall; and after King Mark, there followed King Indres of South Wales; and after King Indres, there followed King Ban of Benwick; and after King Ban, there followed other kings, twelve in number; and after these kings, there followed sixteen dukes, each of whom came in right courtly state; each of whom came heralded with great acclaim by the multitude; and each of whom was welcomed, as befitted his degree, by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. But not one of all these could budge the Sword even so much as a single grain of measure.

Meantime, in these several assays, the morning had passed, and likewise the greater part of the afternoon, so that the slant of the day had now come and the sunlight had turned from yellow to golden red; and yet in all this time had no king been chosen.

Now after the last of the sixteen dukes had made assay and had failed, there followed a long time when nothing passed, and wherein the folk all talked together, much troubled with doubt and wonder. "Who then is there," said one to another, "who may hope to achieve this adventure? Have not all the noblest and worthiest of this land striven and failed? Who then yet remains who may hope to perform this miracle?"

Then, after a long time had thus passed in idle waiting, there came seven of the worthiest of the kings who had striven that day; to wit, King Leodegrance, King Uriens, King Pellinore, King Ban of Benwick, King Lot, King

Nantres, and King Clarence of Northumberland. These seven noble and potent kings came to where the archbishop sat, and thus bespake him. "Sir," quoth the one who spake for them all (and that was King Ban), "here have all the kings and dukes of this country striven before you to draw forth this Sword from the Anvil, and lo! all have failed to accomplish that which you have called upon us to perform. What may we then understand but that the Enchanter Merlin hath done this out of despite and for to bring shame upon all of us and upon you? For who in all the world may hope to draw forth the Sword-blade out from a bed of solid iron? Behold, it is beyond the power of any man. Is it not then plain to be seen that Merlin hath made a jest of us all? Now, therefore, that all this great assemblage may not have been called hither in vain, we do beseech thee of thy wisdom that thou shouldst presently choose one from among us kings here gathered, who may be best fitted to be king and overlord of this realm. Him, when thou shalt have chosen him, we will promise to obey in all things whatsoever he may ordain."

Then was the archbishop troubled in heart, for he said to himself: "Can it be sooth that Merlin hath deceived me, and hath made a mock of me and of all these kings and lordly folk? Surely this cannot be, for Merlin is passing wise; nor would he make a mock of all this whole realm for the sake of so sorry a jest as this would be. Surely he hath some intent in this of which I know naught, wherefore I will be patient for a while longer." Accordingly, having communed thus within himself, he spake aloud in this wise to those seven kings. "I have yet faith," quoth he, "that Merlin hath not deceived us. Wherefore I pray your patience for one short half-hour longer. If in that time no one cometh forth to perform this task, then will I, at your behest, choose one from among you, and will proclaim him king and overlord of all." For the archbishop had faith that Merlin in that time would have declared his intent to all the world.

Nor was his faith in vain, for one came in another guise than such proud estate as had surrounded these kings; and he likewise made assay.

(To be continued.)



BY W. R. MURPHY.

AT Christmas-time long years ago
 "Good will to men" the angels sang,
 "And peace on earth" their message rang
 Across the sky's celestial glow,
 At Christmas-time
 Long years ago.



At Christmas-time that comes to-day
 This message of good will I send —
 The loving wishes of a friend
 That happiness may hold full sway
 At Christmas-time
 That comes to-day.



At Christmas-time in future years —
 And all the other days beside —
 May life for you always provide
 Its laughter all unmixed with tears,
 At Christmas-time
 In future years.





"THERE YOU AIR!" SAID DAVE, THE STAGE-DRIVER. "GOT 'COMMODATIONS FOR THIS LADY AN' GENT, MA'AM HICKEY?" (SEE PAGE 114.)

CHRISTMAS ON THE SINGING RIVER.

By J. L. HARBOUR.

THERE was always a crowd in waiting when the stage-coach arrived in the shabby little mining-camp of Singing River. As a rule, the crowd assembled on the long, wide platform in front of the post-office, which was also the stage-office, the hotel, the general store, and the center from which radiated the social life of the camp. Above the post-office was a small and dingy hall lighted with dripping tallow candles; and such public amusements or entertainments as there were in Singing River were given in this hall. The platform in front of the building was the favorite "loafing-place" of the miners. The arrival of the stage-coach was the connecting-link between Singing River and the great outside world from which the little mining-camp was so far removed. The nearest railroad station was one hundred miles distant, and there was no town within fifteen miles any larger than Singing River, which was but a little hamlet of log-cabins, tents, and slab shanties far up the mountain-side above the

little Singing River in the rocky gulch below. The Singing River was a narrow and shallow stream; but its crystal-clear waters surged in foamy wavelets around moss-covered boulders and went singing on so merrily that there was perpetual music in even the darkest and gloomiest parts of the gulch. But there was ice over the river for seven months of the year, and then nothing was to be heard but the dreary sound of the wind as it went moaning or shrieking up and down the long, dark cañon.

The winters were long and bitter in Singing River. Snow began to fly as early as the last of September, and it still lay deep in the gulches and in the narrow, rocky streets of the camp while the wild flowers were blooming in the far-distant valleys.

But on the December day when this story opens, the stage arrived a full hour in advance of the usual time, and only a few of the men of the camp were at the post-office when Dave Hixon, the stage-driver, drew rein before it,

amid the gently falling snow. There were no passengers on the outside seats, and no inside occupants were to be seen. Apparently the big stage was empty.

"Light load this trip, Dave," said big Jim Hart, the postmaster, as he came out to get the limp and unpromising-looking mail-bag.

"I should say so," replied Dave, as he took off his wide-brimmed felt hat and slapped it against the side of the coach to rid it of the snow that had fallen upon it.

"I reckon travel is about done for this season over the Shoshone trail, an' they 'll soon stop sendin' the coach up here even once a week, an' then we 'll be clean shut off from everywhere. No passengers this trip—eh?"

"Only two, an' there 's so little of them that I reckon they 've rattled round like peas in a pod inside there."

Then Dave leaned far downward and, twisting himself around, called out to some one within the stage:

"Hello there, youngsters! You all right?"

A shrill, childish voice replied: "Yes, sir."

"Well, you 'd better crawl out o' that an' git in where it 's warmer, an' git some o' Ma'am Hickey's hot supper. Hey, Ma'am Hickey, I 've fetched you a kind of a queer cargo!"

This last remark was addressed to a large, round-faced, motherly-looking woman who had come to the door of the hotel part of the building with her apron over her head.

"What 's that you say, Dave?" she called out loudly and heartily.

"I say I 've fetched you a kind of a queer cargo. You just come out an' see if I hain't."

He jumped down from his high driver's seat and flung open the stage door as Ma'am Hickey came over to the edge of the roadway. Reaching into the coach, Dave picked up what appeared to be a round bundle on the back seat, and set it out in the snow with a buffalo robe around it. The robe fell to the ground, and there was revealed to the amazed bystanders a girl of about nine years with big dark eyes that looked calmly and yet appealingly at the staring group. The next moment Dave had set a yellow-haired boy of about five years down beside the girl.

"There you air!" said Davd, the stage-

driver. "Got 'commodations for this lady an' gent, Ma'am Hickey?"

"Well, I 'll make 'commodations for 'em, if I have to turn you out o' your bed to do it," said Ma'am Hickey, as she dropped to her knees before the little boy and took him into her arms, saying as she did so:

"Why, bless your heart an' soul, little feller! I declare if it don't feel sweet to git a child into my arms once more! An' whose boy air you, anyhow?"

"Papa's," replied the boy, shyly, with a slight quivering of his lips and an attempt to release himself from Ma'am Hickey's embrace.

"An' where is papa, honey?"

"Here."

Ma'am Hickey looked around toward the men as if expecting some of them to come forward and claim the child; but they too were looking around inquiringly as the crowd grew in numbers, attracted by the news of the arrival of the stage. Noting the boy's quivering lips and half-frightened look in the presence of all those strangers, his sister stepped toward him and patted his head gently with her mittened hand, saying as she did so:

"There, there; don't you cry, Freddy. Sister will take care of you; yes, she will."

"Where did you little folks come from?" asked Ma'am Hickey, rising to her feet with the little boy in her arms.

"From Iowa, ma'am."

"Ioway!" exclaimed Ma'am Hickey. "You don't ever mean to tell me that you have come all the way from Ioway to this place all by your lone selves?"

The girl nodded her head and said:

"Yes, we did. We had a letter to the conductors on the trains telling them where we were going, and we got along all right; did n't we, Freddy?"

The little boy nodded his head solemnly, too much awed by his strange surroundings to speak.

"Well, if that don't beat anything I ever heard of!" exclaimed Ma'am Hickey. "If I 'd been your ma you would n't 've done it!"

The little girl kept looking into the faces of the men who crowded about them, and said:

"I don't see my papa anywhere. He said

that he would be here when the stage got here with us; but I don't see him at all."

"What is your papa's name, deary?"

"Richard Miller."

The men looked at each other blankly. Some of them opened and closed their mouths without uttering a sound. Big "Missouri Dan" uttered an exclamation under his breath. Ma'am Hickey held up one finger warningly. Then she stooped and kissed the little girl on the brow, and said gently:

"You come right into the house with me, little folks. I'll get you a real nice hot supper, an' then I think you'd best go right to bed after your long ride."

When the cabin door had closed behind them, Big Dan said to the miners around him:

"Well, if this ain't what I call a state of affairs! To think of them poor little tots trailin' 'way out here from back in Ioway only to find their daddy a day in his grave! Cur'us how things turns out!"

"What's to be done?" asked a long, lank, red-whiskered man called "Cap."

"Shore enough," drawled out an elderly man who had been chewing the end of his long gray mustache reflectively.

"I move that we go over to my shack an' talk the matter over," said Big Dan; and, without waiting for his motion to be voted upon, he started toward his cabin, a small log affair a short distance around the rocky road. The men around the post-office followed Big Dan, and, when they were in his cabin, seated on benches and nail-kegs or sprawling on buffalo robes in front of the fire in the big open fireplace, one of the men said:

"What does all this mean, anyhow? You know that I've just come down from Mount Baldy, an' all this is Greek to me."

"Well, it's just this-a-way," replied Dan. "Three days ago a man come into camp on foot from over towards Roarin' Fork. He was so sick when he got here he could hardly speak, an' 'bout all we got out o' him was that his name was Miller. Pneumonia had set in mighty hard, an' in less than two hours after he got here he could n't speak at all, an' he did n't live twelve hours. We laid him under that little clump o' pines down near the bend in the

Singin' River not ten hours ago; an' now here in comes the stage with that boy an' gal, evidently the prop'ty o' this same Miller, who ain't here to meet 'em, an' who won't ever meet 'em in this world. It goes without sayin' that they ain't got no ma. If they had, she'd never let 'em come trailin' off out here all by theirselves. It's mighty tough on 'em."

"That's right," agreed the man called Cap. "I'm old an' tough as ever they make 'em, but I ain't fergot my own childhood so far as not to 'preciate just how them pore little young uns will feel when they reelize the sitooation. I feel fer 'em."

"So do I," said a stalwart fellow of about thirty-five years. "I've got a couple o' little folks o' my own back East, an' that boy reminds me a sight o' my own little chap."

The men were still discussing the strange and sad occurrence, and the question of the future of the children was still unsettled, when the door of the cabin opened and Ma'am Hickey appeared. Her eyes were red and her voice was unsteady as she said:

"I just run over to say one thing, boys, an' that's this: Don't one of you dast to breathe a word to them pore little darlin's about where their pa is until after Christmas. They're not to know that they are orphans until after that time. Their ma died last spring, an' their pa sent for 'em to come out here to him. It's a mighty rough place to fetch 'em to, but the little girl says that an aunt of hers was to come on from California an' be with 'em this winter, an' their pa wrote that he would likely go on to California in the spring—pore man! He's gone on now to a country that's furdur away than that!"

She wiped her eyes on the back of her hand before adding:

"It jest about broke my heart to hear them two pore little things talkin' about Christmas, an' wonderin' what their pa would have for 'em, while I was undressin' 'em for bed. An' I made up my mind that they should n't know a thing about what has happened until after Christmas; an', what's more, some o' you men kin jest stretch your long legs hoofin' it over to Crystal City to git 'em some toys an' things to make good my promise to 'em that if they hung

up their stockin's Christmas eve they 'd find 'em full next mornin'. Now you boys remember that mum is the word in regard to their pa. Leave it to me to pacify 'em in regard to his not comin' for 'em. They 're the cunnin'est little things I ever saw, an' it 's jest too terrible that this trouble has had to befall 'em!"

When good Ma'am Hickey had gone back to the hotel, Big Dan slapped his great rough palms together and said:

"I tell you what, boys! Let 's give them two little unfortunits a jolly good Christmas! I 'm fairly sp'ilin' for somethin' to do, an' I 'll hoof it over to Crystal City an' git a lot o' Christmas gimcracks for 'em."

"I 'll keep you company," said Joe Burke, the man who had two little ones of his own back East. "Travelin' on snow-shoes over the mountain passes at this time o' the year is rather dangerous, an' it 's not best to start out on a trip alone. Then I guess I know more about what would please the youngsters than you would, Dan."

"I ain't ever took occasion to mention it before, but I happen to know a little about what children like, my own self, seein' as I have had two o' my own," replied Big Dan. "They both died the same week. It happened nearly forty years ago, but these two little wayfarers stragglin' into camp this way brings it all back to me."

No one in the camp had ever heard Big Dan speak so solemnly, and there was silence in the room when he added:

"I reckon I know enough about children to know that a big doll with these here open-and-shet kind o' eyes allus takes the fancy of a little gal, an' that a boy allus likes somethin' that 'i make a racket. But I 'll be glad o' your comp'ny, Joe."

Ma'am Hickey appeared again before the conference came to an end.

"They 're cuddled up in bed in each other's arms, cheek to cheek, the pore little dears," she said. "I pacified 'em in regard to their pa without tellin' any actual fib, an' they went to sleep content. The little boy's tongue went like a trip-hammer when he finally got it unloosened, and he jabbered away fast enough. But most he talked about was Christmas. He 's

set his heart on a steam-engine that will go 'choo, choo, choo,' an' if you boys can find such a thing in Crystal City, you buy it an' fetch it along with you, an' I 'll foot the bill. The little girl is doll-crazy, like most little girls, so you must get her one, or more than one. An' of course you 'll lay in plenty o' candy; an' if you can lug home a turkey or two on your backs I 'll get up a Christmas supper for 'em to eat after we 've had the tree."

"The tree?" said one of the men, inquiringly.

"Yes, *sir*; the tree! Of course them little folks must have a tree. They say they want one, an' why should n't they have it, with the finest Christmas trees in the world right at hand here in the mountains?"

"Where you goin' to have the tree, I 'd like to know?" said a burly miner.

"In the hall over the post-office."

"Well, if you ain't plannin' a reg'lar jam-boree!"

"Course I am!" replied Ma'am Hickey. "Got any objections?"

"Better keep 'em to yourself if you have," said Big Dan. "For what Ma'am Hickey an' them two little youngsters says—goes."

"That settles it," said Ma'am Hickey, with a laugh.

Crystal City was a long distance from Singing River, and the mountain trails were hard and dangerous to travel at that time of the year. The stage would not make another trip until after Christmas, and it might be a month before it returned after it left the camp.

Big Dan and Joe Burke set off at daybreak the morning after the arrival of the two little wayfarers. The men had "chipped in" for the purchase of "gimcracks" for the tree, and they had been so generous that Big Dan said just before he started for Crystal City:

"We 'll have to have the biggest pine we kin git for the tree. You chaps have it all set up in the hall by the time we git back."

"You sure you got that list o' things I wrote down for you?" asked Ma'am Hickey. "Men ain't got any kind of a mem'ry when it comes to shoppin'."

"I got the list right here in this pocket," replied Dan, patting his broad chest. "If we have good luck we 'll be back by noon day after



DRAWN BY WILLIAM L. JACOBS.

" ' THE NEXT MINUTE HE WAS DOWN ON HIS KNEES BEFORE 'EM.' " (SEE PAGE 119.)

to-morrow, an' that night is Christmas eve, so you 'll want the tree all ready. Did the little folks sleep good?"

"They never stirred; but once the little boy laughed out in his sleep an' said somethin' about a steam-engine. Both of the children are sleepin' yet."

An hour later the children were up and were eating their breakfast in Ma'am Hickey's cozy kitchen, which was also the dining-room of the hotel.

"Will my papa come to-day?" asked Freddy, as he helped himself to a hot doughnut.

"Don't worry none about your papa, deary," Ma'am Hickey said. "We 'll see to you all right. Let's talk about Christmas."

"I never talked so much about Christmas in all the born days of my life as I talked about it in them two days," said Ma'am Hickey, afterward. "It was the only way I could git their minds off their pa."

Ma'am Hickey's account of the Christmas tree at Singing River is so much more interesting than any account I could give of it, that I think it best to let her tell about it in her own way:

"You see, Big Dan an' Joe Burke got back all right the middle of the afternoon the day before Christmas. They looked like a pair o' pack peddlers, an' they were about fagged out, for they had had a hard time of it pullin' up over the mountain trails in a snow-storm. Joe said he did n't think he could have dragged himself another mile for love nor money. He had two big turkeys on his back besides a great lot of other things.

"Well, the men in the camp had been busy, too. They had cut a big pine an' set it up in the hall over the post-office, an' the way they had dec'rated the hall with evergreen was beautiful. You could n't see an inch of the ugly bare logs nor of the bare rafters. They set to an' scrubbed the floor an' washed the winders, an' strung up a lot o' red, white, and blue buntin' I happened to have in the house, an' I tell you the little old hall did look scrumptious. I kept the children in the kitchen with me, where I was makin' pies an' cake an' doughnuts most o' the time. I give 'em dough to

muss with, an' let 'em scrape the cake-dishes, an' tried to keep 'em interested all the time, so they would n't ask about their pa.

"When Big Dan an' Joe got back the other men had a great time riggin' up the tree. We was afeerd they would n't be able to buy Christmas-tree candles in Crystal City; but, my land! they got about ten dozen of 'em, an' no end o' tinsel an' shiny balls an' things to hang on the tree, an' a lot o' little flags to stick in among the evergreen dec'rations. We had no end o' common taller candles on hand, an' the men were perfectly reckless with 'em. I reckon they put as many as two hundred of 'em up around the room. An' what did they do but go an' rig Big Dan up as Santy Claus! They wrapped him up in a big bearskin one o' the boys had, an' put about a quart o' flour on his long, bushy whiskers to whiten 'em, an' they put a big fur cap on his head, and he did look for all the world like Santy his own self. Yes; an' he had a string o' sleigh-bells they got at the stage-office stable; an' them boys ackshully cut a hole in the roof so Santy Claus could come down through it! La, if you want things carried through regardless, you let a lot o' Rocky Mountain boys take it in hand. They won't stop at nothin'. I reckon they 'd h'isted off the hull roof if it had been necessary to make the appearance of Santy true to life. Such fun as the boys had over it all! An' of all the capers they cut up! Seemed like they was all boys once more! Me an' Ann Dickey an' Mary Ann Morris were the only women in the camp, an' we had our hands full gittin' up the Christmas supper we intended havin' after the tree. Mind you, there was n't a child in camp but just them two pore little orphans, an' all that fuss was on their account. If you think rough miner boys can't have the kindest o' hearts, you just remember that. Every man seemed to be tryin' to outdo the others in doin' somethin' for them little folks.

"Well, I jest wisht you could have seen them children when the time come for 'em to go up to the hall an' see their tree! Little Freddy he give a yell o' joy that most split our ears, an' he jest stood an' clapped his hands, while his sister kep' sayin', 'How lovely it is! Oh, is n't it beautiful?' Then Freddy he screeches out:

'Oh, there 's my choo-choo engine! Goody!' An' how little Elsie's eyes did shine when she saw no less than *three* dolls on the tree for herself! There was enough stuff on that tree for a hull Sunday-school, for the men had been that reckless in sendin' to Crystal City for things.

"Then I wisht you could have seen those children when Big Dan come in all rigged up as Santy Claus! That was the cap-sheaf o' the hull proceedin's! First we heard his bells outside, an' him callin' out, 'Whoa, there!' like as if he was talkin' to his reindeers. Then he clim up the ladder the boys had set outside, an' presently down he come through the hole in the roof. I jest thought little Fred's eyes would pop clean out o' his head when that part o' the show come off! An' what fun there was when old Santy went around givin' the boys all sorts of ridiculous presents! He give old Tim Thorpe a tiny chiny doll, an' big Jack Ross a jumpin'-jack, an' Ben Anderson a set o' little pewter dishes; an' he fetched me a great big old pipe, when they knowed I hated the very sight o' one. I tell you, it was real fun!

"Well, the things had all been distributed, an' the children were loaded down with presents, an' me an' the two other women were about to go downstairs to take up the supper, when the door of the hall opened, and a strange man stepped in. When he saw the children he give a kind of a little outcry, an' the next minute he was down on his knees before 'em, with an arm around each child, an' he was kissin' first one an' then the other. We all jest stared at each other when little Elsie clapped her hands together and said:

"'Why, papa!'

"An' that 's jest who it was! The man named Miller who had died a few days before was a cousin o' the children's pa. It seemed

that this cousin o' the name of Miller had been sent to meet the children, because their pa had been sick an' was n't hardly strong enough to come away over to Singin' River for them. He lived in a little camp only about twenty miles away, but it was a hard road to travel for a well man, even. So this cousin he come, an', from all we could make out, he had lost his way in a storm, an' had laid out a night an' got so chilled it had brought on pneumonia. When he did n't come back with the children after two or three days, their pa got oneasy, an' he set out himself to see what was the matter. He was n't hardly fit to travel, but he come anyhow, an' he was all tuckered out when he got to Singin' River. Then he was so nervous an' kind o' wrought up that no one thought it to his shame that he jest broke clean down an' laughed an' cried by turns, kind o' hystericky like, over the children.

"We did have the best time at the supper! A storm had come up, an' the wind was roarin' an' howlin' in the cañon an' up an' down the Singin' River, an' the sleet was dashin' ag'in' the winder-lights; but that jest made it seem more cheery an' comfortable in the cabin, with a roarin' fire o' pine-knots in the big fireplace at one end o' the cabin, an' the tea-kettle singin' on my big shinin' stove at the other end. Mr. Miller he set between the two children, an' he 'd hug an' kiss 'em between times. We made him stay two whole weeks in Singin' River to rest up an' git real well, an' then a hull passel o' the boys went with him to git the children home. The boys rigged up a sled, an' tuk turns drawin' Elsie an' Freddy over the trails an' away up over Red Bird Mountain. I reckon it was a ride they won't ever forgit; an' none of us that were there will ever in this world forgit that Christmas on the Singin' River."





"I CAN NEVER TELL NOAH FROM JAPHET—I CAN NEVER TELL HAM FROM SHEM."



(With illustrations by Fanny Y. Cory.)



I CAN never tell Noah from Japhet—
 I can never tell Ham from Shem ;
 I can't even choose
 Whose wife is whose,
 Though I 'm intimate friends with them ;
 For they dress, both the men and the women,
 in ulsters down to the floor,
 And Japhet's hat
 Is the same kind that
 Is worn by the wife of Noah !
 Their arms are as flat as flat can be,
 and glued down tight at the side ;
 And, all the while,
 All eight of them smile !
 I never saw one that cried.
 I have often and often watched them ;
 I have taken the trouble to hark ;
 But I never have heard
 One quarrelsome word
 Since Santa Claus brought the ark !

Their faces are far from handsome,
 and they have n't an atom of hair,
 But with kindest features
 They smile at the creatures
 That Santa Claus put in their care.
 The one with the cream-colored ulster
 (I think that perhaps it 's Ham)



"It really must be a leopard."



"I know the elephant by his trunk."



"The one like a pig."



"There's one I think is a rabbit."



"And the striped one must be a tiger."

Takes care of the leopard
As well as a shepherd
Takes care of his favorite lamb.
(It really *must* be a leopard ;
I am almost certain of that ;
For it 's covered with lots
Of deep-brown spots —
And it 's much too big for a cat !)
And the wife I take for Shem's is fond
Of that long-tailed beast of blue ;
It might be a rat
If it was n't so fat,
So we 'll call it a kangaroo.



"So we 'll call it a kangaroo."

I know the elephant by his trunk,
and the camel has humps, of course ;
But the one like a pig
Is twice as big
As the one that looks like a horse !
And there 's one I think is a rabbit
because of his long pink ears ;
But if he is not,
And it 's horns he 's got,
Why, then he is one of the deers.
I thought the sheep was a frog at first,
although he is painted brown,
But never a bit !
His legs are split —
That 's why he is sitting down !
And the striped one must be a tiger,
but his tail is as short as a bear's ;
And there 's only one bird,
And that 's absurd,
For they ought to be all in pairs !



"The camel has humps, of course."



"The one that looks like a horse."



"That 's why he is sitting down."



"There's only one bird."

But Jack loves all of the family,
and all of the animals, too ;
He can watch them alone,
For they 're all his own,
And that 's not so at the Zoo.
And yet, when the Sandman 's coming,
and the supper-table is set,
He 'll leave them around
Upon the ground,
And go away and forget !
And the queerest part of it all is
that, while he 's asleep at night,
Back into the ark
They creep in the dark,
And shut up the windows tight !

I could n't think how they do it,
till I happened to ask of Jack.
What *do* you suppose?
He *really* knows
How the animals all get back!

It appears that just at midnight,
when toys are alive, you know,
And Japhet and Shem
And the rest of them
Walk merrily to and fro,
And Noah, in the play-room corner,
calls all of the beasts by name,
And feeds them and pets them,
And never forgets them,
Though all of them look the same —
The one little bird that has no mate
from the ark flies out and away,
A leaf to seek,
But with empty beak
Comes back at the break of day.
So they know that the flood 's not over,
and go in again, two by two,
And at broad daylight
They are tucked in tight!
Now *I* did n't know that — *did you?*



"NOW I DID N'T KNOW THAT — DID YOU?"

LADY-BABY.

BY RUTH McENERY STUART.

MAMMY LOUIZA was a great woman; and although her cheek was as dark and withered as a prune, and she was old and fat, and often walked with a limp when she declared that the weather as seen out the nursery window "looked like it was fixin' to rain," and though she wore old-fashioned French-calico frocks and a plaid turban tied over her gray hair, there were four golden-haired little children who respectively pronounced her "be-yu-tiful," "boochiful," "booful," and "pwitty." This last, the wee Louise who called her "pwitty," was Mammy's pet; and although but three years old, she was clever enough to measure a new word inside her little mouth before daring to attempt it. On the particular occasion when she had watched the lips of her sisters and brother while they wrestled with the fascinating "beautiful" word, with results so various, she suddenly switched off, her merry eyes fairly twinkling as she did it, and said:

"I fink *my* Mammy's pwitty."

There was a little mischief in the "my," too, and for good reasons.

It would never have occurred to you, perhaps, seeing the golden curls lying against Mammy's dark neck, that the wee maid Louise was her namesake, but such she was in truth.

It was on a Christmas morning when the third little daughter arrived at the great house, during a snow-storm; and when, not long after, old Mammy trudged in, carrying one and leading two toddlers to the bedside to welcome the brand-new sister, the white mama raised her happy face from her pillow and said:

"This is to be your special little 'lady-baby,' Mammy dear, and we are going to let you name her, under one condition, and that is that you may not call her for her own mama."

The children's mother's name was Katharine, a name which was quite out of fashion in those

days, though it has since come back, with all sorts of variations and spellings.

Well, when the mother had begun to speak, and Mammy understood that she was saying something special about her claim to this fresh babyling, her tender old heart was so touched that for fully a minute she could not be sure of her voice.

But after a little while, when joy and surprise had settled into a sweet pride and content, what do you suppose Mammy said?

"Is you for sho' in earnest, Missy?" She always called the children's mother Missy. "Is you gwine lemme name de new lady-baby, sho' 'nough?"

Here she stopped abruptly, as if she scarcely knew whether to go on or not, but only for a minute, and her old voice was not a whit timid when she said:

"I knows Louizy; hit 's a ole black-skin name, an' ef I had 'a' had chillen o' my own, borned to me,—an' air little gal-chile amongst 'em,—I could n't 'a' done no better 'n to glorify my name wid *honest livin'*, an' *pass it on to 'er*—*wid God's blessin'*."

"But dis little lady-chile—dis little rosebud baby—I ain't niver had no baby named arter me, but don't you think maybe we mought sort o' *whiten up* Louizy into Loueezy, ef you please, ma'am, or maybe into Louise? I knows dey been plenty o' quality white ladies wha' carried off dat name wid manners an' granjer."

So the wee "lady-baby" became Louise; and even if the loving mother had not liked the sweet name which has graced many a court, she would have been paid for her own disappointment in the old woman's delight.

Mammy's own black mother had named her Louiza long, long years before even the children's mother was born, and when she grew old enough and gentle and trustworthy enough

to take charge of the nursery at the great house, to be "Mammy" to its fair sons and daughters, she taught them to call her "Mammy Louizy."

"Lady-baby" was Mammy's own name for the daughter babes, the boy being "Junior Man."

Of course there were lots of dolls in the nursery. Think of three girl children with no end of doting relatives, and then, if you have any imagination, you can see the corner where all the

as is quite the thing in doll-town, while others sat idly in rows, dangling their feet wherever there was room.

But there were not so many dollies in Mammy's kingdom that any need be strangers. Each play-mother knew not only her own children, but had pleasant social relations with the entire village.

Baby Louise's favorite doll was one which



MAMMY AND LADY-BABY.

dolls "lived." Here was even a tiny village with a street, if you please, and houses with dolls looking from their windows on either side — with trees here and there, and animals and back yards. There were dolls lying in cradles; some of these larger than the houses, of course,

had come all the way from Piffet's (pronounced Peefay) in New Orleans, which is almost the same as saying it came from Paris. It was the finest doll in the collection, because Mammy, who had insisted on paying for it with her own money, had dictated the order for the

very finest and best. She did not tell Louise about it until the dolly was daily expected by the Mississippi boat, which always brought beautiful things from gay New Orleans; but from the moment Louise knew she was coming she began to speak of all the other dolls as the "old dollies." She even discovered that the youngest had suddenly gotten through her teething, and had to be hurried into short dresses and put in a high chair at table beside her older sisters. And then "Mehitabel Gray's" Mama Edith and "Queen Clorinda's" Mama Daisy began to tease her just a little as to what the great new doll should be called.

"Nem you mind!" Mammy Louiza interrupted. "Wait till she sees her. Her wit 'll find a name fitten for her. Don't you worry about dat!"

Mammy was a bit anxious that the expected doll should have a musical and high-sounding name, and she had even thought out Queen Victoria Princess Arabella as a pretty fair one to submit if the naming should come hard. But she bided her time.

When the box was at last opened upon the nursery floor, and the little Louise herself, fairly trembling with ecstasy, lifted the great doll out and saw her slowly open her wide blue eyes, she looked into Mammy's face and cried with delight:

"I 'm named her, Mammy Wiza. She 's named 'Pwincess Blue-eyes-a'!"

And when the other children laughed, exclaiming, "That 's after Mammy Louiza!" the old woman's pleasure was so great that she forgot all about Queen Victoria Princess Arabella while she steadied herself to say: "I tell you, quick work goes on under dem yaller curls. De idee o' her namin' de baby arter its own eyes an' ole black me at de same time!"

It was a sweet little world, this nursery world where the black Mammy Louiza was chief ruler, for the frequent visits of the dear white mama were in consultation rather than in command.

Sometimes there were as many as three play-mamas rocking their play-babies to sleep at the early play-bedtime, which was properly before the real children's supper-hour; and at this time Junior Man, who was six, would gen-

erally be downstairs in the library with his papa while mama dressed for dinner.

And while Mammy Louiza moved about she would often chuckle to herself as she heard the play-mothers singing their dollies to sleep, and she knew they were echoing the old songs she had sung to them in turn. Particularly would she smile when she caught in the youngest voice, which had a way of wandering up in an uncertain key, the words "yady-baby" and "bye, oh bye, oh bye!" for the lady-baby song was Mammy's own favorite, and when supper was over, and the three elder ones were snugly in bed, after "Br'er Rabbit" and prayers and all the rest, the old woman took solid comfort in drawing her rocker near the waning fire, and singing her precious little namesake to sleep with this little lullaby.

She generally began with a brisk movement, jostling her chair to fit the mood of the wakeful child which she would entrap. But her tone would slowly soften until her crooning voice seemed drowsy enough to put even a stray cricket on the hearth to sleep.

The last stanza Mammy always sang, low and fervently, after her charge was sleeping, and she generally sang it with her eyes closed and face lifted, as if better to realize her heavenly vision.

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!

Dream about de purty things—

Silky frocks an' finger-rings

Fit to dazzle queens an' kings.

Take yo' pick, my pretty little lady-baby, please, ma'am!

REFRAIN: *Don't be 'fraidy, baby,*

Mammy's little lady-baby,

Bye, oh bye, oh bye!

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!

Angels waits to fly wid you

All de heavenly dreamlan' th'ough,

Twix' de stars an' up de blue—

Sail away, my lily one, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!

REFRAIN: *Don't be 'fraidy, baby, etc.*

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!

Little prince wid yaller hair

Waitin' for my chile somewhere

Whilst she 's growin' tall an' fair;

Sleep an' grow, my co'tly little lady-baby, please, ma'am!

REFRAIN: *Don't be 'fraidy, baby, etc.*

*Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!
Walk in dreams woid angels white,
Rainbow-dressed an' crowned woid light;
Smile an' Mammy 'll know de sight—
Don't forgit to tell 'em 'bout old darky-mammy, please,
ma'am!*

REFRAIN: *Don't be 'fraidy, baby, etc.*

*Tell 'em, yas, oh tell 'em, tell 'em, please, ma'am!
Tell 'em Mammy's black an' ole,
Human sins is on 'er soul,
But she gyards de chillen's fol'—
Tell 'em Gord done trus' 'er woid dis lady-baby, please,
ma'am!*

REFRAIN: *Don't be 'fraidy, baby, etc.*



UP TO DATE.



LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

LU SING.

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

IN Paris, in the year 1879, a daughter was born to one of the sisters of Miss Alcott; but the mother, sad to say, died soon after, and so the little girl was carried oversea to America to be brought up by her aunt, to whom she was a great joy and comfort. In a letter of that time to the editor of *ST. NICHOLAS* Miss Alcott wrote: "I have been so bowed down with grief at the loss of my dear sister May that I have not had a thought or care for anything else. May left me her little daughter for my own, and soon I shall be too busy singing lullabies to one child to write tales for others, or go anywhere, even to see my kind friends."

Miss Alcott wrote a number of stories for her little niece when Lulu was about eight years old. These stories were tied up in little birch-bark covers and were called "Lulu's Library." A number of them were afterward published under that title, but the following story has been kept by Lulu all these years. The readers of *ST. NICHOLAS* will be glad to see a new story by the author of "Little Women." And it will interest them, also, to know that Miss Alcott herself and little Lulu are two of the characters in "Lu Sing."

All the principal characters in the story, indeed, are real people, though disguised by Chinese names; and of course the Chinese incidents are entirely fanciful. Little Lulu could not pronounce the names of her two aunts very plainly, so Aunt Louisa became "Ah Wee" and Aunt Anna "Ah Nah." And in the same way the author has introduced Lulu's names of her two cousins as "Ef Rat" and "Jay Rat," while Julia, the name of the governess, became "Ju Huh."

Although "Ah Nah" was extremely fond of tea, she did not own 365 tea-pots. She was somewhat stout, and always happy and cheerful, and was continually trying to help others. "Ah Wee" usually took the lead in family matters, and those who knew the author of the story will easily recognize her in the character.

The real "Lu Sing" after the death of her aunt went back to live with her father in Switzerland, and she is to-day as charming and sweet a girl as could be found anywhere. Her two old cousins, "Ef Rat" and "Jay Rat," are very proud of her.



LITTLE LULU.

ONCE on a time there lived in China a little girl named Lu Sing, which means "Peach Blossom." She was eight years old and very pretty, with beady black eyes, slanting brows, a pug-nose, and a red mouth. Her hair was done in a great bow on the top of her head, and seven golden pins stuck in it. She wore robes of pink and blue and yellow and violet silk, with wide sashes of gauze, and tiny satin shoes, and had parasols of every color to match.

She lived with two kind aunts, one named Ah Nah and the other Ah Wee, and two cousins, Ef Rat and Jay Rat, and she had a teacher whom she called Ju Huh.

Their home was a beautiful Chinese house, with silver balls on the points of the roof that sang sweetly when the wind blew. It was full of tall silk screens, fans and lanterns, mats of perfumed grass, tea-trays and china jars, splendidly embroidered curtains, and gilded dragons made into chairs and sofas.

The cousins were tea merchants, and the old aunts were very rich, so Lu Sing had everything she wanted, and might have been a very happy

girl if one of the naughty spirits that fly about everywhere and are called "jinns" in China, had not come to trouble her, as we shall see.

She was a good child most of the time, always skipping and singing, and kissing the aunts, and romping with the cousins, as gay as a lark; but she did not like to study, and when Ju Huh got out the ebony tablet and the ivory-covered books and the India ink and the brush and the sheets of rice-paper, and struck the brass gong, an hour after breakfast, Lu Sing always began to hear the naughty jinn say, "Don't go! Fret and pout and make a fuss, my blossom, and we will have some fun."

Poor Ju worked long and patiently over Lu Sing, and at last gave up in despair, and could only teach Lu to play on the "tom-tom" and embroider birds and flowers on bits of silk and satin; as little American girls sew patchwork.

Lu liked the music and the pretty colors, so she did these things pleasantly, and she and the jinn felt very proud to think they had got their own naughty way.

Now Ah Nah was a dear old soul, as gentle

as a dove, and her only fault was a too great love of tea. She had three hundred and sixty-five pots,—one for each day in the year,—and

Ah Wee did not drink tea, and was always scolding about it, because she was poorly and cross, and had to live on bird's-nest soup to



THE AUNTS SEND UP THE PRAYER-KITE.

took sips every half-hour; for the fire in the copper pan burned all the time, and her pocket was always full of the finest kind of orange-pekoe, so she could brew tea at any moment.

cure her "whong-hong tummyfuss," which is Chinese for dyspepsia. Well, the two aunts were much troubled about Lu and her naughty ways, and they tried to think how they could

cure her of this last trick; for if she would not study she would be a dunce, and dunces are shut up in little pens and fed like pigs, but not let out to play, like other children. This was such a sad idea that poor Ah Nah cried a cupful of tears over it, and Ah Wee said, with a stamp that smashed two lovely china monsters: "By the Great Dragon and the Sacred Teapot, that child shall be made to mind."

"But how?" said Ah Nah, drying her tears on a pink tissue-paper handkerchief, and taking a sip of tea to comfort her.

"We will fly kites; and if that does not do it, we must put her in the river to soak the badness out of her."

Now flying kites is one way in which the Chinese pray, and putting in the river is the way they punish naughty children. They are shut up in willow cages, and kept in the water, all but their heads, till they are so clean and hungry and tired that they promise to be good for a long time, as they hate to be soaked.

When any one wishes a thing very much he makes a fine kite, writes on it his wish, and at midnight, when the moon shines, he goes to Wang Choo, or "Windy Hill," and flies the kite till it is out of sight; then he cuts the string, and waits to see if it will come down again. If it does, they know that the King of Heaven in the Great Blue Tent says "no" to the wish, and they are very sad. But if the kite never comes down they are sure the prayer will be answered, and go home singing for joy.

Now the two aunts resolved to make a prayer-kite and ask that Lu Sing might grow very good and learn her lessons. So they pasted lovely rose-colored paper on a frame shaped like a star, wrote in silver letters, "Great King, teach our dear child to obey," and one moonlight night when every one was asleep they crept out to fly the kite.

Two funny old ladies, wrapped up in plum-colored cloaks, with gauze veils around their heads, toddled along on their tall slippers, one carrying the kite, the other her dear tea-pot, so she could refresh herself after the long walk. Nobody but the watchmen with their lanterns and war-fans was stirring in the streets. The tea-gardens were empty now, the tom-toms and the whong-whong were done beating in the thea-

ters, the dancing-girls were asleep on their mats, and the flower-boats were floating quietly down the river to the Great Pagoda, to be ready for a feast in the morning.

Away went the old ladies over the bridge, by the china-houses, where the silver bells chimed softly in the wind, and up the long road to the top of Wang Choo. A gale always blew there, and kites always went up well. Ah Nah, being fat, held the ball of silken cord, and Ah Wee, being long and thin like a "hoan-hop," or grasshopper, ran with the great kite and sent it sparkling up in the moonlight. Then they sat down to wait till it was out of sight. Up, up, up it went, like a red and silver bird, carrying the old aunts' prayer to the Great Blue Tent where the King of Heaven lived. When they could see it no longer, Ah Wee cut the string, and Ah Nah at once made some very strong tea to keep her awake until dawn, for if the kite did not fall before then, it never would.

So there they sat, praying and sipping for three long hours; and little Lu Sing was snugly asleep on her sweet-scented mats under the satin coverlet, and never dreamed what trouble the aunts took for her sake. The sky grew pink at last, and the "wik-wak," or lark, began to sing, the lemon-flowers to shine like stars among the dark leaves, and the tea-pickers to come into the wide fields to gather the leaves with the dew on them.

"Sister, our prayer is heard. We may go home," said Ah Wee, who had sat bolt upright like a Chinese mummy all the time, while dear old Ah Nah nodded and dozed in spite of six pots of tea.

"Praise and thanks to the Holy Crocodile and the Golden Butterfly, who is queen of the air. Let us go." And, bundling the little tea-pot into her pocket, Ah Nah waddled after Ah Wee, who went stalking down the hill, singing in a cracked voice:

"Fly, kite, fly fast,
Like a bird in air.
For the Great King's ear
Whisper our prayer.
Lu Sing, Lu Sing,
Our darling child,
Soon, soon shall grow
Patient and mild.

"Then beat the whong,
The tom-tom play,
And all rejoice
In that glad day.
Boom ho! bang hi!
Ching ri do me!
Bum ra! Rum ki!
Ping, sang, boo, see!"

As the people all along the way heard this lovely song, they popped up their heads, or peeped out of the window, and joined in the chorus, for they knew that a prayer-kite had been flown and all was well with somebody.

perverse, and would say "pag" when Ju Huh wanted her to say "pug." She also called her teacher a "mush-wag," which means "old fuss," and was a naughty child till school was over; then she came smiling out to get her

lunch of sugared cakes made of melon seeds and plums.

The aunts did not punish her; they waited, hoping some good "win," or spirit, would come into her heart and make her a better child. But nothing happened till she went to bed, and then no one knew it but Lu Sing. The aunts very early put on the tall blue paper extinguishers, which they used as night-caps, and went to sleep, being wearied after the long night on the hill. Every one else had retired, and the house was shut up.

Now Lu Sing had a charming little room with walls like tea-trays, all black and gold. A great fan moved to and fro over her head all night; the mats were as fine as silk, and the soft quilts were of satin full of swan's-down.

A splendid screen shut in her bed; it was in four parts: at the head, embroidered on gray satin, was a silver moon and stars; at the



Fly, kite, fly fast
Like a bird in air.
For the Great King's ear
Whisper our prayer.
Lu Sing, Lu Sing,
Our darling child,
Soon, soon shall grow
Patient and mild.
Then beat the whong
The lom-lom play
And all rejoice
In that glad day
Boom ho! bang hi!
Ching ri do me!
Bum ra! Rum ki!
Ping, sang, boo, see!

THE AUNT'S SONG OF GRATITUDE.

No one at home but Rox Ha, the house-keeper, knew anything about this night adventure, and the old ladies never said a word; but all day they watched Lu Sing to see if any change took place in her. No; she was very

foot, on pale pink, a golden sun; on the right a rosy branch of peach-blossoms made the white satin lovely; and on the left, upon green, was a crane with long red legs, a black bill, a fiery eye, and feathers that shone like mother-of-pearl.

All rich children had screens like this, with the moon, meaning night, at the head; the sun, for morning, at the foot; the flowers, meaning happiness; and the crane, good luck.

stirred, his tucked-up leg came down, and at last, to her great surprise, his long bill opened, and he said in a rough voice:

"Ha, bad child! Listen to me. I am the



LU SING'S SCREEN.

A light in the gauze lantern made it bright enough for Lu to see the pretty pictures on her screen, and she often lay staring at them till "Peep Oi" (Old Sleep Man) shut her eyes tight. This night she could not even doze, but kept looking at the crane, for he seemed to be alive. His eyes grew as bright as sparks, his plumes

Conscience Bird, and when boys and girls won't be good, I come and peck at them. So!"

Here he gave a snap at the bedclothes, and Lu felt a sharp pinch in her arm. It frightened her very much, but she could not stir, and in another minute the crane pecked again, in another place, still harder. Lu tried to call out,

but she could not speak, and had to lie still till she was well nipped all over. Then the great bird stopped, and after clashing his dreadful beak to get the down out of it, he said sternly:

"Every night that you are bad I shall come to peck. But if you are good I shall tell you stories and bring you nice dreams. Don't tell any one of this, or I shall peck very hard. Try your best, and see if you are not good by and by. Now go to sleep"; and with two waves of his wings Lu was fast asleep.

When she waked up she felt it was only a bad dream, for there stood the crane on one long, red leg just as usual, never saying a word. But she told no one, and really did try that day to behave, for in her heart she knew the Conscience Bird was right, and was afraid he might come and peck again. She expected to be all black and blue with pinches, but her rosy, plump little body was not hurt a bit, only on her breast was one red spot like a star. It had never been there before, and Lu thought that must be the place where her conscience lived. So she folded her gauze "tob," or shirt, over it, and went to breakfast, very sober, with this strange secret in her heart.

"The good win has driven out the bad jinn, and our prayer is answered. Dear Lu Sing is so sweet to-day, it must be so," said the old aunts, watching her with their peeping eyes as she went to "sigh book soh," or school, so pleasantly that Ju Huh nearly fell off her seat to see such a smiling child come in, and not have to be dragged by the tails of her sash or the knobs on her head. But when Lu said "pug" right off instead of "pag," and "ri ko day," not "day so ki," as she usually did, poor Ju cried for joy.

All day Lu was good, and when every one gave her nine kisses at bedtime, and the cousins promised her a little palanquin, or carriage, all to herself, if she kept on in this lovely way, and the aunts burned spices and sticks of sandalwood before the china gods in the sacred corner to thank the Great King, the little girl lay down on her sweet-smelling mats very happy.

Would the crane come? Yes; soon his eyes began to shine, his pearly plumes to move;

down came the red leg, open went the long bill, and out came a soft voice saying pleasantly:

"Good child! I am pleased with you, and you shall have a splendid dream to reward you. Go on trying, and by and by it will be easy to be good."

Then the downy wings waved over her, and Lu dreamed all night of birds and flowers,



THE CONSCIENCE BIRD.

and pretty children, and feasts of bonbons, and fountains of sweet water, and palaces, of jewels, of dolls that talked, and books that never were the same no matter how often you looked at them, and all manner of strange and lovely things.

After that day a great change took place in Lu Sing, and, though she had a naughty fit now and then and got a good pecking, she soon began to find that it grew easy to be good, and then fine dreams and charming stories were her reward, for the Conscience Bird kept his word and in a short time was very fond of Lu.

So the time came when the children chose the Summer Queen, as they called the little girl who was to rule over them in all their plays. The children wagged their heads and talked the matter over, but it could be settled only by votes, when the day came.



"SHE LOOKED LOVELY AS SHE STOOD ON THE STEPS."

during the vacation. It was always the best little girl, and every one wanted to be chosen, for it was a great honor, and the fathers and mothers were pleased and proud, and the child's name was put in the papers, and the emperor sent her a present. This year every one thought it would be Fou Choo, a dear little girl who was loved by all her mates, she was so good and sweet. But the Conscience Bird had his plans, and if Lu had waked up in the night she would have found him gone from the screen, for he flew to the beds of the other children, and in their dreams told them all about her, and how hard she tried to be good, and how pleased the old aunts would be if she should be chosen.

So all were busy getting ready, for each one had a new dress; and as the little girls in China are named for flowers, they wore the colors that belonged to them, and wreaths of lemon, orange, rose, violet, or lily, to match the pretty silk gowns. Lu Sing had a pretty pink robe worked with silver butterflies, nine pearl pins in her hair, all her best necklaces and bracelets, blue velvet shoes, a white silk parasol with silver bells on the points and a coral handle, her best fan, and a wreath of peach-blossoms. She looked lovely as she stood all ready on the steps anxiously waiting for the procession to come along.

The two aunts were going in sedan-chairs, and the Rat cousins, with their peacocks wavy-

ing, peacock-feathers in their caps, and black satin robes shining with gold dragons, were ready to follow, for every one went to this picnic.

Soon the boom! boom! of the whongs was heard, the sweet toot of the tweedle-dees, and the soft thump of the tom-toms; and the splendid banners came waving down the street—for each child carried one, and all were as gay as rainbows. Fou Choo walked at the head, and beckoned Lu Sing to come with her; so Lu ran down and took her hand, and on they marched, two very pretty little girls, one in blue and gold and the other in pink and silver, with the big flags and music going on in front. All the

friends followed, and the street looked as if a flower-bed were passing by. Garlands hung on the houses, lanterns were ready to light at dark, and great fans waved to keep the air cool. The emperor and his children stood on the roof of the palace and looked down, and all the little parasols bowed as the little procession passed.

At last they came to the rose-garden where the picnic was held and the queen chosen. A great golden basket stood at the foot of a throne made of red roses, and as the children passed by, each dropped in a flower which meant a name.

Then, when all but two were seated on the grass, the flowers were counted, and the child who had the most votes was proclaimed the queen. Every one watched eagerly, for soon two piles of flowers grew bigger and bigger; one was forget-me-nots and meant Fou Choo, the other peach-blossoms and meant Lu Sing. At last the basket was empty, and far the largest pile, as all could see, was the pink one!

"Lu Sing! Lu Sing! All hail the queen!" shouted the children; and the gongs banged, and the music played, the flags waved and the friends clapped and cheered. Every one was glad, and Lu Sing was so surprised and pleased that she hid her rosy little face behind her silver fan as she was led by Fou Choo and Lee Wing to receive the crown

of white roses and the beautiful little necklace sent by the emperor. Then the feast was held, and games were begun that lasted all day; and at night the long procession of lanterns went



COUNTING THE FLOWERS.

winding home as the happy children escorted the queen to her house, sang under her windows, and then left her to be kissed by the proud aunties and cousins before she crept into her little bed to thank the good Conscience Bird, who sang her to sleep with the sweetest song ever heard.

SKEE-JUMPING IN NORWAY.

BY C. E. BORCHGREVINK.

EVERY nation possesses its own characteristic sports. In a country with a geographical position like Norway, a peninsula cut into by numberless fiords, and governed in winter-time by severe cold, and in summer by a climate like that of southern Europe (owing to the Gulf Stream), the sports in summer and winter naturally differ as much as the seasons themselves. In summer-time shoals of sailing-boats are seen on the fiords; a Norwegian boy, almost as soon as he can walk, knows every inch of a boat, from keel to mast-head. The natural games of England, cricket and football, have not settled on Norwegian ground, although here and there small clubs patronizing these games exist, having been founded by foreigners.

It is during the Norwegian winter that the most characteristic sports in that country hold sway. When the fiords are frozen after the snow has fallen, the water is covered with the bright, shining ice, and, like the gulls during the summer, the Norwegian boys now glide about on their skates where, in July and August, they had crossed in sailing-boats. But when the snow covers mountain, valley, and fiord many feet deep, snow-shoeing, or *ski-løbning*, as it is called in Norway, becomes universal, not merely as a sport but also as a necessary way of traveling.

The skees are made of wood, generally of ash. It is the most suitable wood for the purpose, but they can also be made out of pine, of birch, or of almost any wood in which the grain runs straight, and which is not too knotted. But woods like ash, which is both hard and flexible, are admirably adapted for skee-making. The skees are some ten feet long and about four inches broad, and taper up in front in a graceful curve. A very slight groove about half an inch wide runs all along the middle of the skee from front to back, giving a tendency to keep it steady in one direction, and to pre-

vent it, to some extent, from sliding to one side. About an inch back of the middle of the skee, a loop is made out of twisted willow or, in recent years, frequently out of leather-covered bamboo, forming a firm but flexible support for the foot about two inches back of the toe. Another loop of leather-covered bamboo runs from the base of the loop for the toes and all around the heel, while one strap combines the two sides of this loop under the foot. The skee-runner then finishes the fastening by buckling a strap over his instep.

This peculiar arrangement of loops and straps allows the runner to move his heel in a vertical direction so far that he could, although with effort, put his knee down to the skee in front of him, while his toes still remain in the loop; but in a horizontal direction the foot is arrested; the skee must follow every small movement of the foot to the right or left.

By use the skees become very smooth underneath, and slip over the snow-crystals almost without friction. While moving, the skee is half shoved, half lifted onward; but never in ordinary walking is it lifted from the surface of the snow; the runner just eases its weight by resting on one skee and shoving the other forward. In this way the runner on level ground glides forward two lengths of his skee, or twenty feet, at each stride. He can thus, with ease, keep up with a trotting horse before a sledge. The Norwegian Lapp has been known to catch the wolf in flight on level ground — the wolf, of course, being somewhat handicapped by sinking in at every step, while the runner without difficulty remains on top of the snow.

When the surface of the snow has become icy by alternate thawing and freezing, the speed of the skee-runner, even on the slightest incline, becomes very great; and on a steep hill the speed is like that of an arrow from a strong bow. Only those who have grown into the



"HE SHOOTS OUT INTO THE AIR IN A HUGE LEAP." (SEE PAGE 138.)

use of skees from boyhood, can ever become experts, or enjoy whole days of travel on them. Unlike the Canadian snow-shoe, which reminds one of a huge tennis-racket, the Norwegian skee

VOL. XXX.—18-19.

combines carrying power with great speed. The skees are for some peasants the only way of traveling in winter, and they are also used almost throughout the country for sporting pur-

poses. Traveling uphill on skees is hard work. One has to "tack" upward, as a sail-boat beats against the wind. It is, of course, in speeding downhill that the skees are at their best.

In recent years skeeing has become very popular as a sport. A great match takes place every year. The day on which it is held has grown into a national holiday, and people come from far off—from Finland, from Sweden, and from the most remote parts of Norway—to these great competitions. The test usually consists in cross-country running, and in the so-called jumping contest.

The running match is a hard one, and the peasants usually carry off the prizes. It is uphill and down, into deep gullies, crossing frozen rivers, through thickly timbered stretches, over fences and frozen lakes, for miles. Only strong physiques can stand this strain; but the competitors are many, especially now that skee-training has become compulsory in the Norwegian army.

The jumping competition takes place on a very steep hill near Christiania. The hill, which descends at an angle of forty-five degrees or more, is about an English mile long. In the middle of this hill a projecting ledge of snow is formed, the upper part of which has less slope than the hill itself; in fact, at its edge it is almost horizontal, and from here there is a sudden drop of about six feet, beyond which the hill continues at an angle of nearly fifty degrees for another half-mile. The competitors, who must not be over twenty-six years of age, assemble on the top of the hill, where each receives a number, which is fastened on his breast. The judges' stand is placed at the right of the ledge or jump. About sixty feet below this is another stand, for the physicians, who always are present, in case of accident. However, I myself have taken part in the competitions, and have witnessed many others, and I can truly say that in all my experience I have never seen any bones broken, although, if a runner is so unlucky as to land head first, he is likely to be picked up unconscious. On the whole, very few serious accidents occur.

The signal is given for number one to start. To the spectators on the plain below he looks like a little black speck up there on the top of

the hill. His speed increases from second to second, until he disappears for a moment while in the hollow leading on to the jump. Then, quicker than thought, he is seen to shoot out into the air in a huge leap, alighting some sixty feet or more from the ledge where he left the ground. He is then lost in a cloud of snow, where the enthusiastic spectators get glimpses perhaps of a broken skee, or a wildly whirling arm or leg, until at last the snow settles, and the somewhat stunned sportsman, amid the laughter of the spectators, begins to collect his scattered skees and thoughts!

It is fine to see the experienced runner as he starts from the top of the hill. Cautiously, at the signal, down he plunges, well knowing the difficulty of the task before him, his mind being concentrated on one thing only—to excel the other competitors. He reserves all his strength for the jump at the supreme moment when he arrives at the brink of the ledge. You see him crouch together as he leaves the ground; then, proudly stretching out his full length, he shoots through the clear, frosty air. He struggles for a moment to keep his balance; the pressure of the air through which he speeds helps him; he regains his equilibrium, and controls his skees, which at times are inclined to cross each other. The excited crowd below can see his sudden, convulsive efforts, and before they have time to realize it, there he is, shooting downward again, landing squarely on his skees; one knee is slightly bent and somewhat behind the other, but his skees are running parallel. A mist of snow envelops him at the moment he lands; his body erect, though shivering from the excitement and the strain; his head proudly lifted in the thrill of victory, while greeted by ringing cheers from thousands of interested spectators.

It is clear that this sport must impress on the character of the Norwegian boy an individuality distinctly its own. No sport, in my opinion, requires such strength and persistence as skeeing; while the jumping also demands nerve and presence of mind. The most accomplished jumper may have trouble with his skees while in the air after having taken the leap from the ledge, and he learns at an early age the value of quick thought and action, because it is the right use



"HE STRUGGLES FOR A MOMENT TO KEEP HIS BALANCE."

of the seconds in his wild rush down the hill and through the air that determines whether he shall succeed in out-leaping his rivals or not. The possibility of keeping one's balance while shooting through the frosty air naturally depends greatly upon the pressure of the atmo-

sphere against the body. This is so strong that I have sometimes felt it almost as a solid support on which to lean and regain my balance.

During the holidays even quite small boys set off on skeeing-parties into the woods, and remain away for weeks. Each brings a little bag of provisions on his back, and they walk on through the woods and fields until dark, when they dig down into the snow or build themselves a hut out of branches of the pine, and realize their dreams of the life among the Lapps or Eskimos. Necessarily on these trips their food frequently becomes scarce, for the distances between the huts are often very great, and the Norwegian boy is taught to get along without luxuries. He mends his skees himself, and thus the sport makes him handy and resourceful, as he generally has to take from the willow or from the pine the raw material necessary to make his traveling-gear fit for use again.

In polar exploration the skees have perhaps a great deal to do with the success of the Norwegian expeditions. It is almost necessary to be able to use them if one is to cover long distances on the snow within the polar circles.

I once took part in a unique bear hunt on skees—unique because it was a tame bear that

had escaped from a show in Christiania. It was indeed more dangerous than a wild one, as it had more confidence and was less afraid of men. After having done a good deal of mischief among the cattle, and after having frightened some peasants very much by entering their huts and helping himself to food without any ceremony, he made off into a thick forest. The snow was lying several feet deep at the time. Many people had tried to catch him on foot, but in vain. The bear treads on the whole of his sole, thus keeping himself well up on the surface of the snow. However, we set out with a party on skees, with guns and knives, most of us being under eighteen years of age. I shall not forget our delight when we found, from the tracks left by the bear in the deep snow, that we were approaching him. It was rather an exciting time as we entered in among some old pines where a slight slope gave us considerable speed, and we almost ran straight into the arms of the bear before we noticed him—some of us having just time to steer aside and quickly slide past him as he sat grinning savagely at us and showing all his teeth. A well directed shot from a peasant soon ended his career. I doubt if anybody without skees could have caught this bear that had so long and cleverly avoided pursuit.



A WINNER. "LANDING SQUARELY ON HIS SKEES."



It was one of those real-life Christmas days, and Queerin Place was apparently trying to run in from Sixth Avenue out of the wet, trusting to its small size to prevent any rain from falling upon it. Queerin Place should never be in bustling, busy New York, even in the finest weather; it is a brief little "place," slanting westward from the big thoroughfare in the bias fashion characteristic of Greenwich Village and its neighborhood, and it looks precisely like a place in a Dickens story, with its uniform row of little brick houses, its solitary lamp-post, straggling vines, and miniature front yards. It has a prison on one hand, it is true, but it is far and away from having a palace on the other; and in no other way than the prison on one hand does it suggest anything Venetian.

There was nothing to distinguish the bass-viol player's house from its neighbors; but to Beth Esling, the bass-viol player's little granddaughter, it had a distinct personality, the indefinable something that makes one's home look wholly different from any other house. Beth was fourteen, and all these—to her—many years of her life had been spent in that little Queerin Place home. Being a very sunny and home-

loving little body by nature, she loved the humble house with all her heart, and to her eyes it was always pretty and attractive. So it was not discontent that gave her face an expression as little like Christmas eve as the one the skies wore: Beth was struggling with a sense of duty, and a natural regret which even the recollection of the party she was to give that evening could not banish—indeed, the duty and the regret were all mixed up with the party.

"For years," as Beth would have said sincerely,—in reality for nearly one whole year,—she had worshiped at the shrine of Lois Akers, the prettiest of all the girls in the Greenwich Avenue school, and the nicest, as she thought, though there were those of her mates who would have greatly shocked her by excepting bright-eyed Beth herself, who was not pretty, but whose sunny temper, absolute frankness, and unselfishness made her thoroughly lovable. Lois liked Beth. If it had not been for what Mr. Moddle, in "Martin Chuzzlewit," delicately termed "another," Beth Esling would have been Lois's dearest friend. As it was, she had been only second best, and second place is hard to fill when one loves with a devotion equal to a

"double first," if there ever is such a grade as this in friendship.

Lois's chosen chum, preferred to all the world, was Emily Harkness; and for Em's sake Beth was put aside. But since Thanksgiving the situation had changed: a misunderstanding had arisen between Lois and Emily. From closest arm-entwining, secret-exchanging intimacy they had passed to complete estrangement, avoiding each other at recess, going home on opposite sides of the street, and, when fate forced them to meet, studying the heavens with an intentness worthy of a Herschel without a telescope. In her loneliness Lois had turned for comfort to Beth, and for a whole month Beth had joyfully filled the place Em left vacant—too indifferent or too sweet-tempered, as one chose to regard it, to resent what in her heart she knew for truth, that Lois would have preferred Emily to her at the very worst stage of the quarrel, and had only let her play a rôle similar to that attributed by Hamlet to "imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay." She filled the void left cold and blank by Emily's unkindness.

And now, just when she was beginning to hope that Lois was really getting ready to love her best, the key to the misunderstanding between the girls had accidentally fallen into Beth's hands. By a chance word overheard at school she knew that Emily had never said the cruel thing Lois believed she had said of her; and in her upright and unselfish heart Beth knew it was for her to set the crooked straight, give Lois back her friend, and sink once more to her old second place in Lois's affections.

It was not easy; Beth had shed some tears on her pillow the previous night, but she had never for a moment hesitated in her determination to do right, at whatever cost to herself; and that was why she was making the cake for her Christmas-eve party with a sober little face that matched the gray skies outside.

"What do you want for your Christmas, Beth?" asked eight-year-old Elsie, for the twentieth time at least, as she balanced herself on the arm of her chair. She was in such throes of desire to tell her sister what she had for her that Beth felt it was cruel not to let her speak and free her mind of its burden.

"Nothing in the world," she answered, however, just as she had answered each previous time—"unless it is something to cover that hole in the carpet," she added, glancing ruefully at the worn place where her grandfather rested the end of his big bass viol when he practised. Beth recognized the necessity for much practice when one occupied the distinguished place held by her grandfather in a big Broadway theater; but, remembering her party that evening, and how pretty Emily Harkness's home on West Eleventh Street was, with its polished floors and beautiful rugs, she could find it in her heart to wish that Mr. Esling would not practise precisely in the middle of their tiny parlor, where one could never cover the worn spot with the smallest chair or footstool without a deadly certainty of sending some unfortunate victim tripping into the fireplace.

"Five eggs," said Beth, glancing at the cook-book, "and a cup of milk—that's all right. Oh, baking-powder! Elsie dear, would you mind asking grandma for the baking-powder? And the raisins?" she called as the little girl ran away. "They're on the second shelf, right-hand side; I stoned them last night."

Grandma was making some of her famous steamed custards for Beth's party; she was willing and glad to do it, but only with the stipulation that Beth was to leave her the kitchen in solitude. One moment too long, and the steamed custards would "separate"; one moment too little steaming, and they would be underdone; for such a delicate task Grandmother Esling could not share her domain with a cake-maker, so, there being no one to be shocked, Beth had taken her ingredients into the parlor, and there was whipping her cake into a degree of "goodness" that almost proved the efficacy of corporal punishment.

"Here they are!" cried Elsie, running back into the parlor. "Here they are! And grandma says she thinks those custards will be done in ten minutes, and you can put your cake in the minute they're out."

"All right; thanks, Elsie," said Beth, sifting the flour with its baking-powder contents into the cake, and adding the raisins from the small bowl in a delightful mass. "Now I'll tell you

one least bit of a Christmas present you 're to have; you are to sit up for my party till the very last girl has gone home."

"I know it; grandma told me," said Elsie.

he, truly, Elsie?" cried Beth, scattering flour recklessly in her excitement.

Elsie nodded hard, being prevented from speaking for the moment by half a ginger cooky.

"Three violins, one harp, a flute, grandpa himself with the big fiddle—they 're all going to play for you; I 'm almost crazy!" cried Elsie, getting rid of the impediment to her speech in an incredibly short time.

Beth's face cleared of all trace of worry. With a shout of triumph, she snatched her small sister around the waist and executed a sort of inspired fandango.

"It 's simply fine!" she cried. "Only think! a regular orchestra! Why, none of the girls ever have had more than a piano-player, except Minnie Ivers, when her brother played the violin for us. But he was only taking lessons, and he could n't do much; he tried the 'Intermezzo,' and nearly broke down. Still, he was n't so bad in a waltz and two-step," added Beth, with the kindly patronage of her musical inheritance.

"Yes," said Elsie; "and grandpa says when you 're tired dancing and playing games he is going to get the gentlemen to play Christmas carols and German *Lieder*, and

"And I know a little surprise that *you* are to have; it 's something about music."

"Oh, did grandpa get some of the orchestra? He said once he thought he might. Did they 'll sing, and we 'll all sing, and end up with a regular old-time Christmas; that 's what he said."

"Now won't that be too perfectly lovely?"



"IT 'S YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENT, BETH!" SHE GURGLED." (SEE PAGE 144.)

cried Beth. "We can't dance much; we have n't room: but we can give the girls the kind of time they can't get in big houses"; and she gave her bowl a twirl expressing her delight as she tilted it to pour the mixture, lumpy with its raisins, into the pan.

Alas! perfect joy is of brief duration in a workaday world; even on Christmas eve it is uncertain! A treacherous bit of butter had secreted itself on the brim of poor Beth's bowl, and in her moment of triumph undid her. The twirl of joy ended in a wild scurry of the bowl through her slippery fingers, and it alighted, bottom up, in the middle of the floor, depositing the cake dough, raisins and all, right in the spot worn bare by Grandpa Esling's practising.

For a moment Beth and Elsie stared in horror-stricken silence at the wreck; then Elsie tumbled down on the floor beside the cake to laugh as only a girl of eight, without responsibilities, can laugh at a catastrophe. "It's your Christmas present, Beth!" she gurgled. "You said you wanted something to cover the spot in the carpet, and you've got it! Oh, my, ain't it awful, but ain't it awful funny!"

Beth's good nature gave out. "Elsie Esling," she said indignantly, "you ought to have a good whipping! Here I've been working and working, and stoning raisins all night,"—which was a slight exaggeration,— "and I've got to go out, and I'd like to know what there is funny about it, or where you think any more cake is to come from?" And Beth's indignation ended in a burst of tears.

Elsie's indecorous sense of humor fled in merited disgrace at the sight of her beloved sister's tears; she never could bear to have Beth cry, and she rarely had to. Of all days in the three hundred and sixty-five, the last for such unusual grief was surely Christmas eve. Elsie at once got on her feet and flung her arms around Beth. "Don't cry, Bethlings," she whispered. "I'm dreadful sorry I laughed. I've got twenty-five cents grandpa gave me for Christmas candy; I'll give it to you for cake, and don't you mind about the dough. We can save some of it and bake it anyway."

To Elsie's delight, Beth laughed at this, and kissed her. "I did n't mean to scold, pet; it

was funny, and you may laugh. I guess we could n't use even the top, though. But I don't want your money. Grandma will know a way to make time for more cake. Let's get this up, and then I'm going to see Lois. I'm glad grandma's favorite bowl did n't break."

Again in a low-spirited mood, because of a mishap that would have tried the patience of an older cook, Beth pattered along in her rubbers and mackintosh for her last call on Lois as her special friend. And, moreover, her errand, though appropriate to the season, since it was to restore peace, would, by disclosing Emily's innocence, result in the loss of her own coveted position as Lois's chum.

Lois was at home, and for one cowardly moment Beth was tempted to keep silence. Lois was so pretty and attractive in her soft red house-dress! No one would ever know that it had been in Beth's power to straighten matters, even if Lois and Emily became friends again later without her aid. But Beth conquered the mean feeling without much effort, and told her little tale to Lois, dropping her eyes to shut out the sight of the glad light dawning in those of her friend as she listened.

"That is a Christmas present worth having, Beth!" said Lois, at the end. "I'll see Emily at your house to-night, and I'll beg her pardon for not trusting her, and we'll have a merry Christmas. To tell the honest truth, I was feeling as though I did n't care whether Christmas came or not this year; of course I had you, but it made me just wretched to think my own, most intimate friend was n't mine any longer. You have been such a dear all the way through; if it had n't been for you I could n't have borne it; and now you have really made me a present of Emily."

That night fourteen girls and ten more or less reluctant boys gathered in the little house in Queerin Place. There was not the slightest danger of any one discovering the worn place in the carpet; for once it was thoroughly covered.

Upstairs Beth, the hostess, tried not to be jealous as she saw Lois whispering earnestly to Emily, and then both girls fall on each other's shoulders in a manner most dangerous to love-locks, however assuring of restored love. And in the warmth of that affection, starved for a



"HOW THOSE KIND, RUDDY-FACED FRIENDS DID PLAY!" (SEE PAGE 146.)

month, Beth saw Lois go downstairs, her arms once more entwining Emily, and quite forgetful, for the time, of the devoted little column on which she had leaned during her hour of affliction.

But it is quite surprising what a good time one can have, in spite of drawbacks, if one sets about it in the right way. In trying to make her guests happy Beth became happy herself. Grandma had exercised the quiet magic of her kind, and cake as good or better than the lost loaf of Beth's making filled the little dining-room with its spicy aroma. Then there were other surprises from the same silent source: a ring-cake, borrowed from Twelfth-night customs, a bowl of "snapdragon" for the brave to venture and the timid to scream over, as the flames wreathed around girlish fingers. But the orchestra! Beth thought she would never again, even in thought, grumble if the point of Grandpa Esling's bass viol made a hole in the parlor floor all the way through to the cellar. How those kind, ruddy-faced friends of his did play, to be sure! And how delightful it was to dance to the music of a real orchestra, even though the room was too small to allow six couples on the floor at once! However, the entire house was so small that the music could be heard in one part of it as well as another, and that was a decided advantage, for before long everybody was dancing, upstairs, in the hall, and even in the kitchen. At last, when supper was over and breaking-up time near at hand, how lovely were the dear old carols and the sweet German folk-songs sung by fresh young voices to the accompaniment of the instruments played by those who remembered long-past Christmases in the Fatherland!

"It has been the nicest party I ever went to," said Emily, kissing her hostess a loving good night; and the spirit of the peaceful time had sunk so far into Beth's heart that she felt no pang in remembering what had made it especially pleasant to Emily.

Christmas justified itself in the morning,

Beth's day began well. First of all a little lost kitten came mewing to the door, and she made herself happy in comforting it and establishing it in permanent warmth and safety on the hearth of the sunny little parlor in Queerin

Place; for Beth's love went out to all little dumb, dependent creatures. Then there were white parcels, so many and so alluring for her and Elsie to open, that breakfast suffered while they feasted on rapturous surprises. All Beth's friends of the night before had secretly left some little remembrance with Grandma Esling for her, and the Christmas-eve party proved a surprise-party by a sort of postscript.

But the best gift of all came later. Lois and Emily came down Queerin Place arm in arm, and rang the bell of the little house. When Beth opened the door to them they took her bodily in their four arms at once, and told her they had talked her over on the way home the night before, and had decided that they could never be happy for a moment unless she promised to make the third side of a perfect triangle of friendship.

"For you see, Bethy," said Lois, in her ear, contriving to speak to her privately, while Elsie was excitedly displaying her Christmas treasures to Emily, "you see, I have had you so much for a whole month that I simply can't do without you; I love you every bit as well as Emily—every *bit* as well," she added with significant emphasis.

"Well, I never dreamed—" Beth began. "You know I just love you to death, Lois Akers; but you would n't love me if you knew how mean I have felt about you and Emily, nor how hard it was to me to tell you she had n't talked about you; I'm pretty mean."

But Lois laughed aloud. "Mean? You?" was all she said, but Beth was satisfied; her cup of joy was running over.

And at that moment Elsie cried out: "Oh, Beth, look! Is n't that funny? Here 's the present you wanted to cover the worn spot in the carpet! Just look!"

The sunshine rested brightly on the place kind Grandpa Esling's bass viol had worn bare, and in it, on her back, with her paws drooping on her snowy bib, lay the stranger kitten, purring a loud carol of gratitude and content. She was like a little living emblem of the peace and kindness reigning in the Queerin Place home.

Happy tears rose in Beth's eyes as she wound her arms around Lois and kissed her. "What a dear, dear Christmas!" she whispered.



BY CLIFFORD HOWARD.

OF course Uncle Sam is best acquainted with the good old-fashioned Christmas—the kind we have known all about since we were little bits of children. There are the Christmas trees with their pretty decorations and candles, and the mistletoe and holly and all sorts of evergreens to make the house look bright, while outside the trees are bare, the ground is white with snow, and Jack Frost is prowling around, freezing up the ponds and pinching people's noses. And then there is dear old Santa Claus with his reindeer, galloping about on the night before Christmas, and scrambling down chimneys to fill the stockings that hang in a row by the fireplace.

It is the time of good cheer and happiness and presents for everybody; the time of chiming bells and joyful carols; of turkey and candy and plum-pudding and all the other good things that go to make up a truly merry Christmas. And here and there throughout the country, some of the quaint old customs of our forefathers are still observed at this time, as, for instance, the pretty custom of "Christmas waits"—boys and girls who go about from house to house on Christmas eve, or early Christmas morning, singing carols.

But, aside from the Christmas customs we all

know so well, Uncle Sam has many strange and special ways of observing Christmas; for in this big country of his there are many different kinds of people, and they all do not celebrate Christmas in the same way, as you shall see.

IN THE SOUTH.

Siss! Bang! Boom! Sky-rockets hissing, crackers snapping, cannons roaring, horns tooting, bells ringing, and youngsters shouting with wild delight. That is the way Christmas begins down South.

It starts at midnight, or even before; and all day long fire-crackers are going off in the streets of every city, town, and village of the South, from Virginia to Louisiana. A Northern boy, waking up suddenly in New Orleans or Mobile or Atlanta, would think he was in the midst of a rousing Fourth-of-July celebration. In some of the towns the brass bands come out and add to the jollity of the day by marching around and playing "My Maryland" and "Dixie"; while the soldier companies parade up and down the streets to the strains of joyous music and fire salutes with cannons and rifles.

To the girls and boys of the South, Christmas

is the noisiest and jolliest day of the year. The Fourth of July does n't compare with it. And as for the darkies, they look upon Christmas as

thinks of refusing them, and at the end of the day they are richer and happier than at any other time during the whole year.

Except for the jingle of sleigh-bells and the presence of Jack Frost, a Christmas in the South is in other ways very much like that in the North. The houses are decorated with greens, mistletoe hangs above the doorways, Santa Claus comes down the chimneys and fills the waiting stockings, while Christmas dinner is not complete without the familiar turkey and cranberry sauce and pies.

IN NEW ENGLAND.

For a great many years there was no Christmas in New England. The Pilgrims and the Puritans did not believe in such celebrations. In fact, they often made it a special point to do their hardest work on Christmas day, just to show their contempt for what they considered a pagan festival. During colonial times there was a law in Massachusetts forbidding any one to celebrate Christmas; and if anybody was so rash in those days as to go about tooting a horn and shouting a "Merry

Christmas!" he was promptly brought to his senses by being arrested and punished.

Of course things are very different in New England now, but in many country towns the people still make more of Thanksgiving than they do of Christmas; and there are hundreds



"THE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS."

a holiday that was invented for their especial happiness. They take it for granted that all the "white folks" they know will give them presents; and with grinning faces they are up bright and early, asking for "Christmus gif", mistah; Christmus gif', missus." No one

of New England men and women still living who knew nothing of Christmas as children — who never hung up their stockings; who never waited for Santa Claus; who never had a tree; who never even had a Christmas present!

Nowadays, however, Christmas in New England is like Christmas anywhere else; but here and there, even now, the effects of the early Puritan ideas may still be seen. In some of the smaller and out-of-the-way towns and villages you will find Christmas trees and evergreens in only a very few of the houses, and in some places — particularly in New Hampshire — one big Christmas tree does for the whole town. This tree is set up in the town hall, and there the children go to get their gifts, which have been hung on the branches by the parents. Sometimes the tree has no decorations — no candles, no popcorn strings, no shiny balls. After the presents are taken off and given to the children, the tree remains perfectly bare. There is usually a short entertainment of recitations and songs, and a speech or two perhaps, and then the little folks, carrying their presents with them, go back to their homes.

IN NEW MEXICO.

In certain parts of New Mexico, among the old Spanish settlements, the celebration of Christmas begins more than a week before the day. In the evenings, a party of men and women go together to the house of some friend — a different house being visited each evening. When they arrive, they

knock on the door and begin to sing, and when those in the house ask "Who is there?" they reply: "The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph seek lodgings in your house." At first the inmates of the house refuse to let them in. This is done to carry out the Bible story of Joseph and Mary being unable to find lodgings in Bethlehem. But in a little while the door is opened and the visitors are heartily welcomed. As soon as they enter, they kneel and repeat a short prayer; and when the devotional exercises are concluded, the rest of the evening is spent in merrymaking.



CHRISTMAS IN THE SOUTH.

On Christmas eve the people of the village gather together in some large room or hall and give a solemn little play, commemorating the birthday of the Saviour. One end of the room

is used as a stage, and this is fitted up to represent the stable and the manger; and the characters in the sacred story of Bethlehem—Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels—are represented in the tableaux, and with a genuine, reverential spirit. Even the poorer people of the town take part in these Christmas plays.

AMONG THE SHAKERS.

The Shakers observe Christmas by a dinner at which the men and women both sit down at the same table. This custom of theirs is the thing that serves to make Christmas different from any other day among the Shakers. During all the rest of the year the men and women eat their meals at separate tables.

At sunset on Christmas day, after a service in the church, they march to the community-house, where the dinner is waiting. The men sit on one side of the table and the women on the other. At the head sits an old man called the elder, who begins the meal by saying grace, after which each one in turn gets up and, lifting the right hand, says in a solemn voice, "God is love." The dinner is eaten in perfect silence. Not a voice is heard until the meal comes to an end. Then the men and women rise and sing, standing in their places at the table. As the singing proceeds they mark time with their hands and feet.

Then their bodies begin to sway from side to side in the peculiar manner that has given this sect its name of Shakers.

When the singing comes to an end, the elder chants a prayer, after which the men and women silently file out and leave the building.



A VISIT FROM PELZNICKEL.

AMONG THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS.

"You'd better look out, or Pelznickel will catch you!" This is the dire threat held over

naughty boys and girls at Christmas-time in some of the country settlements of the Pennsylvania Germans, or Pennsylvania Dutch, as they are often called.

Pelznickel is another name for Santa Claus. But he is not altogether the same old Santa that we welcome so gladly. On Christmas eve some one in the neighborhood impersonates Pelznickel by dressing up as an old man with a long white beard. Arming himself with a switch and carrying a bag of toys over his shoulder, he goes from house to house, where the children are expecting him.

He asks the parents how the little ones have behaved themselves during the year. To each of those who have been good he gives a present from his bag. But—woe betide the naughty ones! These are not only supposed to get no presents, but Pelznickel catches them by the collar and playfully taps them with his switch.

IN PORTO RICO.

The Porto Rican boys and girls would be frightened out of their wits if Santa Claus should come to them in a sleigh drawn by reindeer and should try to enter the houses and fill their stockings. Down there, Santa Claus does not need reindeer or any other kind of steeds, for the children say that he just comes flying through the air like a bird. Neither does he bother himself looking for stockings,

for such things are not so plentiful in Porto Rico as they are in cooler climates. Instead of stockings, the children use little boxes, which



CHRISTMAS IN ALASKA. (SEE PAGE 154.)

they make themselves. These they place on the roofs and in the courtyards, and old Santa Claus drops the gifts into them as he flies around at night with his bag on his back.

He is more generous in Porto Rico than he is anywhere else. He does not come on Christmas eve only, but is likely to call around every night or two during the week. Each morning,

therefore, the little folks run out eagerly to see whether anything more has been left in their boxes during the night.

Christmas in Porto Rico is a church festival of much importance, and the celebration of it is made up chiefly of religious ceremonies intended to commemorate the principal events in

the life of the Saviour. Beginning with the celebration of his birth, at Christmas-time, the feast-days follow one another in rapid succession. Indeed, it may justly be said that they do not really come to an end until Easter.

One of the most popular of these festival-days is that known as Bethlehem day. This



BETHLEHEM DAY IN PORTO RICO.

is celebrated on the 12th of January, in memory of the coming of the Magi. The celebration consists of a procession of children through the streets of the town. The foremost three, dressed in flowing robes to represent the wise men of the East, come riding along on ponies, holding in their hands the gifts for the Infant King; following them come angels and shepherds and flute-players, all represented by children dressed in pretty costumes and carrying garlands of flowers.

AMONG THE MORAVIANS.

For many days before Christmas the Moravian housewives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, are busy in their kitchens making good things for the holidays — mint-cakes, pepper-nuts, *Kümmelbrod*, sugar-cake, mince-pies, and, most important of all, large quantities of "Christmas cakes." These Christmas cakes are a kind of ginger cooky, crisp and spicy, and are made according to a recipe known only to the Moravians. They are made in all sorts of curious shapes — birds, horses, bears, lions, fishes, turtles, stars, leaves, and funny little men and women; so that they are not only good to eat, but are ornamental as well, and are often used by the good fathers and mothers as decorations for the "*Putz*."

Every Moravian family has its *Putz* at Christmas-time. This consists of a Christmas tree surrounded at its base by a miniature landscape made up of moss and greens and make-believe rocks, and adorned with toy houses and tiny



A CHRISTMAS "PUTZ."

fences and trees and all sorts of little animals and toy people.

On Christmas eve a love-feast is held in the church. The greater part of the service is devoted to music, for which the Moravians have always been noted. While the choir is singing, cake and coffee are brought in and served to all the members of the congregation, each one receiving a good-sized bun and a large cup of coffee. Shortly before the end of the meeting lighted wax candles carried on large trays are brought into the church, by men on one side and women on the other, and passed around to the little folks—one for each boy and girl. This is meant to represent the coming of the Light into the world, and is but one of the many beautiful customs observed by the Moravians.

IN ALASKA.

"Going around with the star" is a popular Christmas custom among some of the natives

soldiers of Herod trying to destroy the children of Bethlehem; but these happy folks of Alaska evidently don't think much about its meaning, for they make a great frolic of it. Everybody



CHRISTMAS IN HAWAII.

of Alaska who belong to the Greek Church. A large figure of a star, covered with brightly colored paper, is carried about at night by a procession of men and women and children. They call at the homes of the well-to-do families of the village, marching about from house to house, headed by the star-bearer and two men or boys carrying lanterns on long poles. They are warmly welcomed at each place, and are invited to come in and have some refreshments. After enjoying the cakes and other good things, and singing one or two carols, they take up the star and move on to the next house.

These processions take place each night during Christmas week; but after the second night the star-bearers are followed by men and boys dressed in fantastic clothes, who try to catch the star-men and destroy their stars. This part of the game is supposed to be an imitation of the

is full of fun, and the frosty air of the dark winter nights is filled with laughter as men and boys and romping girls chase one another here and there in merry excitement.

IN HAWAII.

The natives of Hawaii say that Santa Claus comes over to the islands in a boat. Perhaps he does; it would be a tedious journey for his reindeer to make without stopping from San Francisco to Honolulu. At all events, he gets there by some means or other, for he would not neglect the little folks of those islands away out in the Pacific.

They look for him as eagerly as do the boys and girls in the lands of snow and ice, and although it must almost melt him to get around in that warm climate with his furs on, he never misses a Christmas.

Before the missionaries and the American settlers went to Hawaii, the natives knew nothing about Christmas, but now they all celebrate the day, and do it, of course, in the same way as the Americans who live there. The main difference between Christmas in Honolulu and Christmas in New York is that in Honolulu in December the weather is like June in New York. Birds are warbling in the leafy trees; gardens are overflowing with roses and carnations; fields and mountain slopes are ablaze with color; and a sunny sky smiles dreamily upon the glories of a summer day. In the morning people go to church, and during the day there are sports and games and merry-making of all sorts. The Christmas dinner is eaten out of doors in the shade of the veranda, and everybody is happy and contented.

IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Buenas pasquas! This is the hearty greeting that comes to the dweller in the Philippines on Christmas morning, and with it, perhaps, an offering of flowers.

The Filipino, like the Porto Rican and all others who have lived under Spanish rule, look upon Christmas as a great religious festival, and one that requires very special attention.

On Christmas eve the churches are open, and the coming of the great day is celebrated by a mass at midnight; and during all of Christmas day mass is held every hour, so that every one may have an opportunity to attend. Even the popular Christmas customs among the people are nearly all of a religious character, for most of them consist of little plays or dramas founded upon the life of the Saviour.

These plays are called *pastores*, and are performed by bands of young men and women, and sometimes mere boys and girls, who go about from village to village and present their simple little plays to expectant audiences at every stopping-place. The visit of the wise men, the flight into Egypt—these and many other incidents as related in the Scriptures are acted in these *pastores*. Sometimes, by way of variety, the sacred scenes are interspersed with dancing and the singing of popular songs; and sometimes the village band will play a few airs at intervals; altogether the performances are very entertaining and are always very much enjoyed.

On moonlight nights during the Christmas holidays the young people hold merry gatherings out in the open air, where they dance and play and sing amid the delicious perfumes of glorious night-blooming flowers and the balmy breezes of a tropic land.



CHRISTMAS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

THE WATERMELON STOCKINGS.

BY ALICE CALDWELL HEGAN.

(Author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch.")



"'MAZIN' GRACE SLEPT PEACEFULLY."

"Jes' look at dat ornery little nigger!" exclaimed Aunt Melvy, as she deposited a basket of clothes on the cabin floor. "I lef' her to clean up, an' to put de 'taters on to bile, an' to shoo de flies offen de twinses, an' I wisht you'd look at her!"

Nell Tracy, who had come down with Aunt Melvy from the big house on the hill, viewed the culprit ruefully. 'Mazin' Grace was Aunt Melvy's eighth daughter, and had been named for her mother's favorite hymn, which began "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound." She was very short and very fat, and her kinky hair was plaited into ten tight pigtails, each of which was bound with a piece of leather shoe-

string. At present she sat with her back propped against the door, her mouth wide open, and slept peacefully while the flood of her mother's wrath passed over her.

"Oh, but, Aunt Melvy, won't you please let her come?" begged Nell, throwing off her sun-bonnet and letting down a tangle of yellow curls. "I have n't got anybody to play with me. Mother drove to town with father, and she said I was to get 'Mazin' Grace to stay with me."

"Why, I 'se gwine to let her come, honey," said Aunt Melvy, "co'se I is. I would n't mek you cry fer nothin'! Only, I 'se gwine to whup her fust. She ain't 'sponsible on her word, dat 's what 's de matter wid her. She

done 'low to me she would n't wink her eyeball while I was gone. What you think I ketch her doin' one time?" Aunt Melvy's voice sank to a whisper. "She sewed, on a Sunday! She knowed as well as me dat w'en she gits to heben she 'll hab to pick out ebery one ob dem stitches wid her nose."

Nell looked at the sleeper's round pug-nose and wondered how she would ever be able to do it. But it was no use thinking of the punishment in the next world, when an immediate whipping was promised in this; consequently she turned the whole battery of her eloquence upon Aunt Melvy, who in the end gave in.

Ten minutes later the two little playmates were skipping down the avenue under the shady old beech-trees where their fathers had played together in the long ago.

"Is yer maw gwine lemme tek you to de Christian an' Debil Society?" asked 'Mazin' Grace, as they skirted the house, and made their way into the back yard.

"Yes," cried Nell, gleefully, "and I am going to wear the watermelon stockings!"

If 'Mazin' Grace had not been so black, a cloud might have been seen passing over her face. She was the sharer of all Nell's woes, and of all but one of her joys. The exception was the possession of the watermelon stockings.

These were a sort of heirloom among the children of the family, and were regarded with reverence and pride. They were of a peculiar shade of pink silk, with clockwork up the sides and sprays of white flowers embroidered over the instep. A long time ago they had belonged to Cousin Mary, who was quite a big girl now, and she had sent them to Uncle Robert's boy up in Ohio. He learned to waltz in them, and in time sent them to little Agnes in Virginia, who wore them for a year on state occasions, then sent them back to Kentucky to little Cousin Nell.

If ever a tempted soul longed for a forbidden treasure, 'Mazin' Grace longed for the watermelon stockings. "Effen they was mine, I'd give you one anyways," she argued with Nell, but to no avail.

In the back yard stood a big old chicken-coop, which had been cleaned out and nicely whitewashed for the children to use as a play-

house. It had an upstairs and a downstairs, and a square little door that fastened on the outside with a wooden peg. Nell could climb



"AND I AM GOING TO WEAR THE WATERMELON STOCKINGS," CRIED NELL.

in easily; but 'Mazin' Grace was too fat, and after many efforts she had given up, contenting herself with watching the play from outside.

To-day a doll funeral was in progress, and Nell, moving comfortably about inside the coop, arranged the broken bits of china in a spool-box, tied a sweeping piece of crape on her biggest doll, and allowed her imagination full swing in depicting the grief of the doll family.



"NELL TIED A SWEEPING PIECE OF CRAPE ON HER BIGGEST DOLL."

'Mazin' Grace, sitting under the apple-tree outside, took little interest in the proceedings. The hot sun beat down on the long stretch of blue-grass, and up from the creek came the warm odor of mint; a fat old bumblebee hummed close to her head, but she did not stir. She was thinking about the watermelon stockings.

Presently she began to move stealthily toward the coop, watching Nell cautiously from the corner of her eyes. "Ain't nobody to home but me an' her," she whispered to herself, "an' there would n't nobody know, an' —" With a deft movement she closed the small door and fastened it with the wooden peg. Then she turned, and, leaving the unconscious prisoner, sped softly up the garden path, through the basement, and up the stairs.

In Mrs. Tracy's bedroom was a wide old mahogany dresser with big glass knobs that seemed to glare unwinking reproof at 'Mazin' Grace as she opened the bottom drawer.

"Dis heah is where dey stays at," she said, tossing aside ribbons and laces in her eagerness. "Oh, goody, goody! Heah dey is!"

Tearing away the tissue-paper, she gazed with delight at the coveted stockings. The knobs might glare as much as they liked; the sparrows might scold themselves hoarse on the window-sill; 'Mazin' Grace was lost in the rapture of the moment, and refused to consider consequences. She traced the pattern of the embroidery with her stubby finger, she rubbed the silk against her cheek, and even tied one stocking around her head and stood on tiptoe to see the result in the mirror. The more she handled them the more reckless she became.

"I 'spect I 'se gwine to try dese heah stockin's on!" she said, with a giggle, as she drew the silken lengths over her bare, dusty feet. "Gee Bob! Ain't them scrumptious! I look lak a shore-'nuff circus lady!"

She tipped the mirror in order to get the full reflection, and stood for a moment entranced. Then,

catching her ragged skirts in either hand, she bowed low to her image, and, after cutting a formal and elaborate pigeonwing, settled down to a shuffle that shook the floor. Music and motion were as much a part of 'Mazin' Grace as her brown skin and her white teeth. All Aunt Melvy's piety had failed to convince her of the awful wickedness of "shaking her foot" and "singing reel chunes." She danced now with utter abandon, and the harder she danced the louder she sang:

"Suzanne Goffin, don't you cry;
Take dat apron from your eye.
Don't let de niggers see you sigh;
You 'll git a pahtner by an' by."

The small figure with its flying pigtails swayed and swung, and the pink legs darted in and out. Backward, forward, right glide, left glide, two skips sidewise. Her breath was almost gone, but she rallied her forces for a grand

finale. With a curtsy to the bedpost and hands all around, she dashed into the rollicking ecstasy of the "Mobile Buck":

"Way up yonder in de moon,
Yaller gal lickin' a silver spoon.
Cynthy, my darlin', who tol' you so?
Cynthy, my darlin', how do you know?"

As she dropped panting on the floor, something arrested her attention. She held up her head and sniffed the air. It was a familiar odor that roused her conscience as nothing else could have done. Something burning usually meant that she had failed to watch the stove, and that catastrophe usually meant a whipping.

porch, and looked anxiously up and down the road. Nothing was to be seen save the long stretch of empty turnpike, with the hot sun beating down upon it. As she turned to go back inside the window, she stopped, horrified. On the cornice of the roof above her a glowing ember was smoldering dangerously. 'Mazin' Grace wrung her hands.

"Mammy said I was gwine to git burned up fer bein' so wicked. An' Marse Jim's house, what 's belonged to we-all sence de wah! An' de settin'-room where we hangs up our stock-in's ebery Christmas! An' dere ain't nobody to take keer ob it all but me! Oh, Lordy! Lordy! what mus' I do?—what mus' I do?"



"CATCHING HER RAGGED SKIRTS IN EITHER HAND, SHE BOWED LOW TO HER IMAGE."

She scrambled to her feet and ran to the window. Over across the road, the big barn where Mr. Tracy stored his grain was wrapped in flames. The wind was blowing from that direction, and it fanned the smoke into 'Mazin' Grace's eyes.

"Gee! Dat was a spark of fire," she cried, as she snatched her hand from the window-sill. She climbed out of the window upon the

As she stood there, wild-eyed and tearful, a thought made its way through the kinky hair into her bewildered brain. She darted back into the house, and reappeared with a broom.

"I 'se gwine up dat ladder," she said with grim determination, "an' I 'se gwine to sweep dem sparks off. An' effen I can't sweep 'em off I kin spank 'em out."



"FROM SIDE TO SIDE SHE SCRAMBLED, SWEEPING, BEATING, AND FIGHTING THE FIRE."

The fire at the barn was now raging; great volumes of smoke swept toward the house, heavily laden with live embers. 'Mazin' Grace, choking and frightened, wielded her broom with telling effect; no sooner did a spark touch the roof than it was brushed off into the long grass below. But they were coming faster and faster, and, watch as she would, she could not keep some of them from igniting the dry shingles. From side to side she scrambled, sweeping, beating, fighting the fire with all the strength in her little body. Her eyes smarted fiercely, her feet were bruised, the heat was suffocating; but 'Mazin' Grace never thought of deserting her post: she worked, as she had danced, with all her might and main, pitting her puny strength valiantly against that of the flames.

But courage does not always bring success. Just when the fire at the barn began to subside, and the sparks ceased to fall on the roof, a tiny column of smoke began to curl up from the gabled roof of the porch. 'Mazin' Grace clambered down the ladder, and, sitting astride of the angle, worked her way outward toward the

fire. She could not carry the broom, but if she could only reach the blaze perhaps she could beat it out with her hands! Excitement gave her fresh strength. On either side the roof sloped abruptly, but she worked her way on, inch by inch. Two shingles had caught—three! The smoke had changed into a blaze. Leaning over as far as she dared, 'Mazin' Grace stretched out her hand toward the flame. She could not reach it.

With a cry of terror and despair, she fell forward on the ridge; all her courage and strength suddenly deserted her—she could only cling there face downward, and sob and sob as if her heart would break. "Effen our house burns down, I want to die too," she whispered. "But Miss Lucy an' Marse Jim won't never know how I tried to take keer on it. 'Deed I did."

Up from the creek came the faint perfume of the mint; the sparrows scolded in the beech-trees. Nellie, who had broken her prison bars, called again and again from the playground, while slowly but surely up the roof crawled the ever-increasing flames. But 'Mazin' Grace heard nothing, saw nothing; she lay uncon-

scious on the roof, an absurdly pitiful little figure in her ragged dress and pink silk stockings.

It was six weeks before 'Mazin' Grace's burns were sufficiently healed for her to walk. Mr. Tracy, hearing of the fire on his farm, had driven home just in time to save the child's life. His porch was completely destroyed; but the old homestead, with its host of memories and associations, stood intact—a monument to the faithfulness of a very naughty little girl.

Almost the first time 'Mazin' Grace was allowed to go out, she took Nell to the "Christian an' Debil" Society. She limped as she walked, for her feet were still tender from the recent blisters; but, in spite of the pain, her smile was one of unalloyed bliss. Two pairs of sturdy little legs were keeping step in two new pairs of watermelon stockings.



THE "JUMPER"—A SLED WITH ONE RUNNER.

BY GALLOWAY C. MORRIS.

THERE is a winter sport that is popular in the region about Lake George, and nowhere else, so far as the writer is aware, which would please many of the readers of ST. NICHOLAS who live in those regions where snow abounds.

It is to ordinary coasting on the common sled what coasting on a bicycle is compared to running downhill on an express-wagon.

The whole art and mystery and trick of the thing is to balance on a sled with only one runner while going at a rapid rate downhill.

I have seen them used on hills with a gentle incline as well as on those quite steep; and I once saw one used on the terraces of Fort William Henry. I also know of one case where, some fifteen years ago, a boy, now a prosperous young business man, rode his "jumper" successfully down the long and steep toboggan-slide at Saratoga. I doubt not that the quickness of perception and skill of action, developed

by such sport as a boy, has stood him in good stead in his business. At any rate, he has been as successful in one as in the other. But he also knew how to combine play with work.

The youngest boys commence the sport on the curved stave of a barrel, which has only one advantage that suggests itself—it saves some wear and tear of cloth. Before very long the little fellow who starts on a barrel-stave will nail a block of wood on it so as to raise him up a little. He gradually gets that block a little higher to raise him more and more, until finally nothing will satisfy him but a well-made jumper, and he generally proceeds to make it himself, or his father helps him at it, for I know of no place where one can be bought.

"Jumper" is the local name applied to a single-runner sled. In its perfection it is steel-shod, as shown in the pictures that accompany this article—the steel being generally taken

from a cross-cut saw such as the lumbermen use. This runner varies from one and a half to two inches wide, and the bearing on the snow is from three to four feet long, the front

of the runner the harder it will be to keep it going in the desired direction as it passes over the little inequalities in the "track," which constantly tend to swerve it from its course as

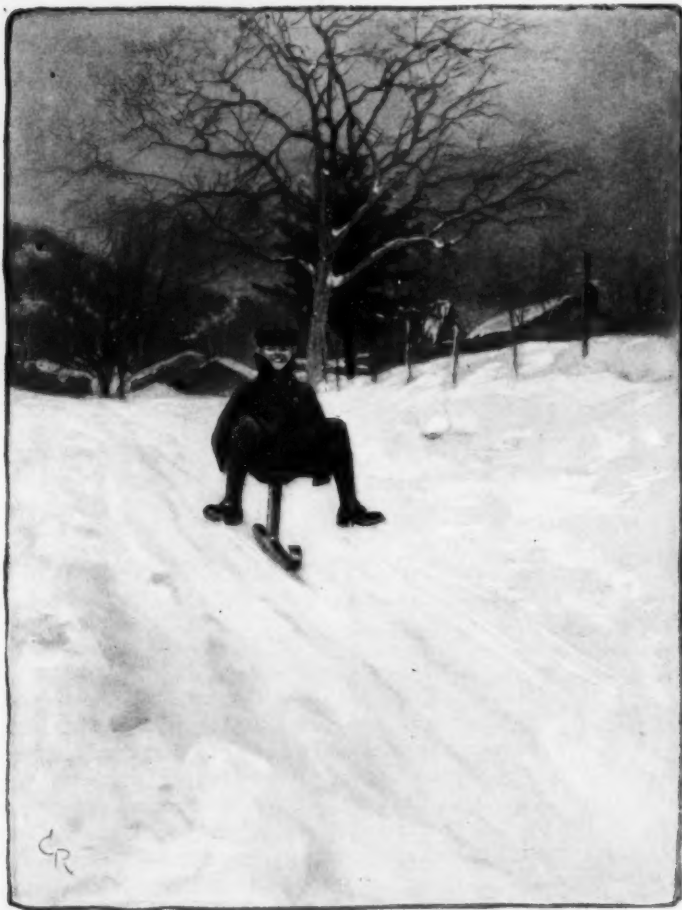
well as to tilt it over sidewise. The coaster's skill is exhibited in preventing either one of these things, for either of them is sure to result in an upset.

It is not a particularly dangerous sport, for the fall, when it comes, is never a bad one, as sixteen inches is considered a good high seat, and this is about the height of an ordinary chair. It is the height of the one shown in the pictures.

The balance is maintained by quickly meeting or anticipating by a rapid movement of the feet, and sometimes also of the hands, any impulse to go over to either side. But as a general thing a skilled coaster uses only his feet for this purpose, and grasps the edge of the seat with both hands, as shown in the pictures, to enable him, by a judicious twisting on the seat, to overcome any tendency to

swerve out of the desired direction, as well as to help him to make a turn when the track is a crooked one. In this region the track is generally a straight one downhill and out upon the lake; but I have also seen jumpers used on a road with a decided turn in it.

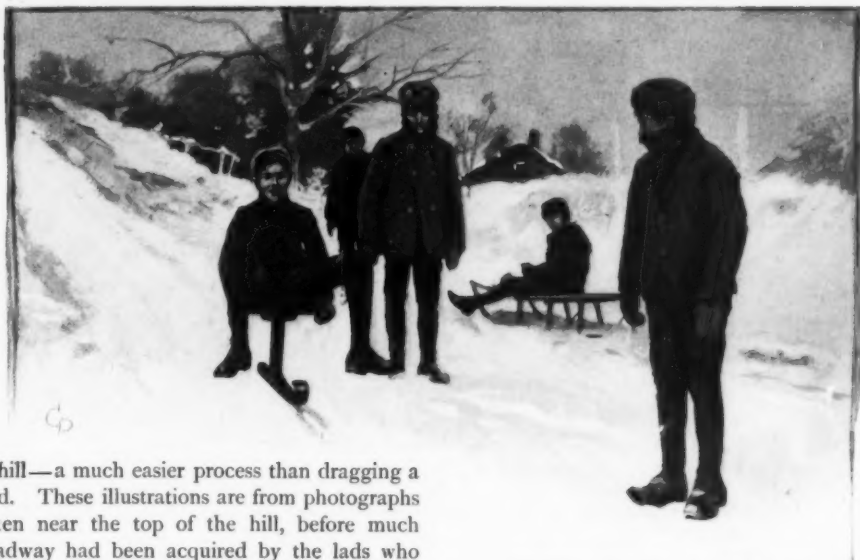
The illustrations which accompany this article give a good idea of the sport and of the way balance is maintained; and one of them shows the manner in which the jumper is carried



THE BALANCE IS MAINTAINED BY A QUICK MOVEMENT OF THE FEET.

being curled up somewhat like an old-fashioned skate. Just behind the center of the length an upright is framed into the wooden part of the runner, and on this upright a seat is firmly fastened.

The height of the seat is entirely a matter of taste with the individual maker; but it will be readily seen that the higher the seat the greater the skill required to balance and to guide the jumper. Furthermore, the greater the length



uphill—a much easier process than dragging a sled. These illustrations are from photographs taken near the top of the hill, before much headway had been acquired by the lads who were coasting. This particular hill is quite a long one running down to the lake, on the level ice of which the speed slackens and the jumper gradually comes to a stop.

Of course as the track becomes compacted by use it gets more and more icy and "fast,"

FREQUENTLY USED ON THE SAME HILL WITH
ORDINARY SLEDS.

just as with any other coasting, and indeed it is not an uncommon thing to see jumpers used on a good coasting slope alongside of ordinary sleds.



THE JUMPER IS EASILY CARRIED UPHILL.

THE FALLING OF THE VENICE BELL-TOWER.

BY RUTH HURLBUT.

(Illustrated from photographs taken at the time.)

IN one of the world's most beautiful cities, this Christmas morning of 1902 will find hardly a trace of a noble landmark that has greeted every Christmas sunrise for a thousand years. For, as our older readers will remember, the famous Campanile, or bell-tower, of St. Mark's Cathedral, in Venice, fell crumbling into a heap of ruins on the 14th of last July. It was three hundred and twenty-two feet in height, and it was begun about 900 A.D.—though its marble top, and the figure of the angel which surmounted it, were added in the fifteenth century. The citizens of Venice deeply mourn its loss—and all Christian nations regret the destruction of the stately tower which rose above the chief square of Venice, alongside of the wonderful Church of San Marco, and the superb Palace of the Doges.

Our readers will be interested in the following account of the disaster, written by a young American girl who, with her sisters, was present when the tower fell, and who was fortunate enough to take photographs showing this historic catastrophe at almost the very moment of its happening.



ST. MARK'S CATHEDRAL, VENICE.
(From a drawing by J. D. Woodward.)

THE CAMPANILE.

MONDAY the 14th of July was a beautiful sunny day, and all Venice was happy and expectant on account of the grand *festa* which was to take place on the following Saturday. No one could have imagined that this peace

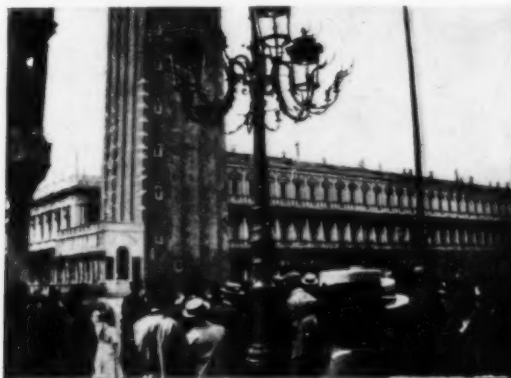
and calm were about to be shattered by such an awful disaster as the falling of St. Mark's beautiful Campanile.

We started from the hotel rather early, intending to go to the bank for money. Our

gondolier landed us at the Piazzetta, and as we were about to walk between the Cathedral and the Campanile a guard stopped us. He made some remark in Italian which I only half under-

as it sought its way to the top by jumping from one window to the next.

I don't know why I took a picture then, unless it was because some one suggested that it "would be fun to have a picture of a crack." I certainly never thought it would be perhaps the last picture taken of the Campanile. Even as the fissure continued to grow, no one seemed to have any idea of what was about to



NO. 1. THE TOWER A FEW MINUTES BEFORE IT FELL.

stood, but from the calm manner in which he spoke and from the fact that there was some scaffolding on the Campanile, we thought that there was nothing more serious the matter than that they were repairing it, and that he wished us to cross on the other side.

We did so, and then saw that there was quite a crowd, mostly of tourists, looking up at the Campanile. We looked, and were surprised to



NO. 2. SAME VIEW AS NO. 1. AFTER THE FALL OF THE TOWER.

happen, or thought of personal danger any more than did the numerous doves that flew about. No particular attempt was made by the officials to keep the people at a safe dis-



NO. 3. ONLY A HEAP OF RUINS.

see on that side of the tower a crack which grew larger as we watched it. We stood there in a doorway, quite spellbound, watching the crack grow higher and higher, wider and wider,

tance. We simply stood back and watched it as we would have watched a play, to see what was going to happen next. The crack widened and a brick fell to the pavement below. Then



NO. 4. THE RUINS TWO MINUTES AFTER THE FALL.

another and another, and then all at once the whole lower part caved in, and the upper part with the bronze angel on top slowly swayed, toppled, and at last came down or collapsed



NO. 5. STILL DUSTY.

coating of fine white dust which rose in clouds and settled upon everything and everybody.

It was a sad sight to see the poor Venetians sorrowfully gazing at the ruins, for to each one of them it was a personal loss. Like their ancestors for centuries and centuries, they had walked to and fro on the Piazza with



NO. 6. THE CITY AUTHORITIES ON THE RUINS.

—and immediately everything was hidden in a thick cloud of dust.

Now that all danger was over, everybody became panic-stricken, and rushed and pushed in all directions, and with a wild jargon of screams. We managed to get out and take some pictures, though, before the crowd hid everything—for in less than two minutes a great throng of Venetians was on the spot, drawn by the deafening noise which



NO. 7. AT 1 P.M.

the Campanile looking down at them, and it seemed impossible for them to realize that it was no longer there!

Doubtless the pigeons, too, miss the hospitable roof and cornices of their favorite tower. They all did not, however, forsake the square, but many returned at once to the bountiful tourists, as eager and importunate as ever.



NO. 8. THE DOVES STILL FLYING IN ST. MARK'S SQUARE.

THE GROWN-FOLKS' CHRISTMAS.

By M. M. D.

Nor by glad Christmas bells alone;
 Not by the crowded, warm hearthstone;
 Not by the quip, the clasp, the feast,—
 Scarce by the lone star in the East,—
 Nor yet by gift nor deed of grace,
 Nor mistletoe, nor wreathèd place,
 Nor merry speedings to and fro,
 Nor any circumstance or show —
 Know we the Christmas day.

These are but symbols, hallowed, dear —
 The cheery crowning of the year.

But by the light in children's eyes;
 By their blithe shouts and happy sighs;
 By secret plottings, fond and deep,
 When little heads lie still, in sleep;
 By glowing sympathy that starts,
 Melting the winter in our hearts;
 By quickened joy and holy pride,
 When to the Child all doors swing wide —
 Know we the Christmas day.



I knew a crazy man who walked into an empty pulpit one Sunday, and taking up a hymn-book, remarked: "We have had a good fall for getting in corn and potatoes, let us sing Winter." So I say, "Let us sing Winter." What else can we sing, and our voices be in harmony with the season?—THOREAU.

READY FOR WINTER.

OUT in the country, at any farmer's home, you will find by the last of November or by the early part of December that everything is ready for winter.

On a bright day after the first snowfall there is noticeable an appearance of snugness, plenty, and comfort. Go down the road, around the south side of the barn, where you see the young folks in the picture. The great cone-like stacks of hay with their caps of snow stand like sentinels and seem to say, "Here are the beginnings of your supplies; we are ready for winter, if you are." The oxen and the cows, as they chew their cuds contentedly in the sun, would tell us if they could that they know everything is ready. There is no need to worry about the coming cold. The yearlings, the calves, and the colt frisk around to the other side of the barn-yard as we ap-

proach, and say by their actions, "We have warm and well-bedded stables, and, oh my! you should see the hay-mow—it reaches to the roof."

Ask the farm young folks, and they will tell you: "Of course the mow is full. Did n't we jam it away down even to the eaves with the pitchfork last July? And such fun, too, 'mowing away,' even if it was 'hot work'!"

The full corn-crib this side of the barn at the right tells the same story of readiness for winter. Perhaps that is the reason why the rooster jumps on the post, stretches out his neck, flaps his wings, and opens his mouth to tell the world that he is happy. And the hens stop their scratching and eating to scurry off with the gleeful cry of *cut-cut-cut-cutarcut*. They, too, are happy.

Come around to this side of the yard, near the woodshed by the house, and here, too, we find readiness for winter—jolly old Uncle

Henry at the woodpile. He stops driving his sharp-toothed buck-saw through a stick of white birch, and says, "You 're right; it 's as good a pile as there is in town. I reckon there 's going to be a cold winter—and I kinder thought 't was just as well to be fixed for it."

"White birch makes good fuel, does n't it?"

"There 's nothing much better than a roaring white-birch fire on a cold evening, when the snow sparkles in the moonlight and creaks as you step on it. To make it just right you 've got to have a mug of cider and a dish of apples and a pan of walnuts to go with it. An' I 've got them, too. The cellar 's full o' barrels, and I don't know how many walnuts an' chestnuts and hazelnuts the young folks have spread on the floor to dry in the attic."

That reminds us of our chipmunk that went into winter quarters last month, only he put his supply of nuts down in his snug "cellar."

In the field, that appears so cold and bleak, there is readiness for winter. The mice have

their runways under the dead weeds and grass, and the meadow-lark and quail have sunny nooks, on the south side of tangled clumps.

A miniature of such coziness is seen in the foreground of the picture—a "hedgehog

caterpillar" curled up under the stone. In such a place, and in a drowsy state, they usually spend the entire winter, but often crawl into the sunshine of a bright day. Indeed, John Burroughs cites, as one of the peculiarities of an open winter, that the "caterpillars did not seem to retire, as they usually do, but came forth every warm day." You will recall that we have some butterflies, too, that seek shelter but are out on sunny days, flitting here and there even over snow-banks. Of course you know that many members of the moth family are in their snug cocoons hanging on twigs or fastened to the under side of boards, fallen logs, fence rails, etc.



CATERPILLAR UNDER A SHELTERING STONE.

In many similar places of protection you may find various kinds of insects in all stages of existence.



"UNCLE HENRY AT THE WOODPILE."

Every Eastern farmer takes great pride in his woodpile. In many parts of New England the size of the woodpile is regarded as a measure of the thrift of the owner. White birch is the favorite—typical of all home comforts.



BAT HANGING HEAD DOWNWARD IN A HOLLOW TREE.

Our artist has depicted a view *from the inside of the tree*. Looking out through the knot-hole (the large, clear opening near the bat), you see the sprays of branches in the distance. It's thus a "put yourself in the bat's place," and you see how it is, from his point of view, to be ready for winter.

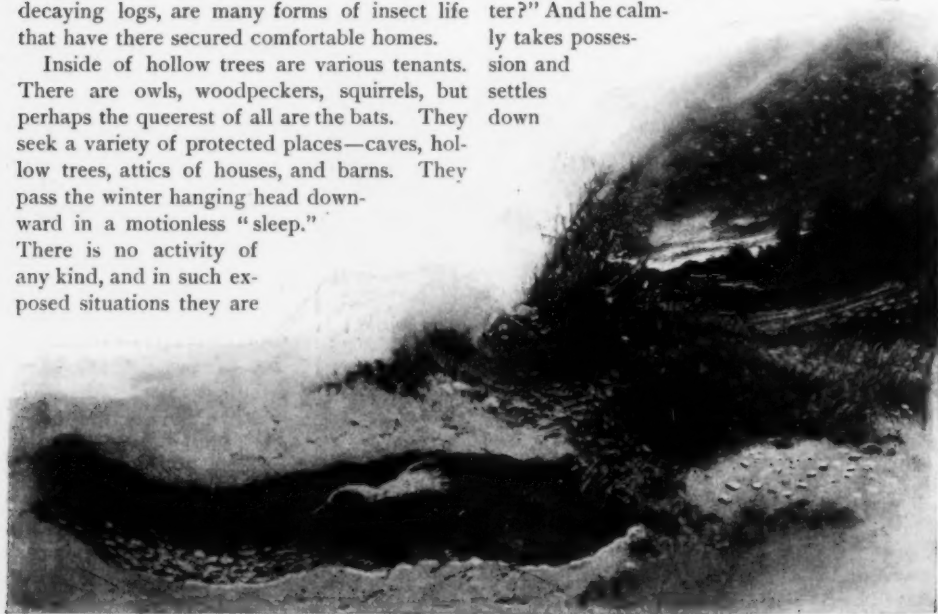
Under the stones, and under the bark of decaying logs, are many forms of insect life that have there secured comfortable homes.

Inside of hollow trees are various tenants. There are owls, woodpeckers, squirrels, but perhaps the queerest of all are the bats. They seek a variety of protected places—caves, hollow trees, attics of houses, and barns. They pass the winter hanging head downward in a motionless "sleep." There is no activity of any kind, and in such exposed situations they are

perhaps frozen solid, as are the caterpillars; yet when spring comes their blood moves again, and they are once more on the wing, as if they had passed the winter in the warmest of the tropical regions.

With many forms of life the readiness for winter is not to secure a place to protect them from cold or even from freezing, but for security against sudden changes of conditions and of temperature. It is a protection in some cases similar to that of the plants on the lawn that were covered with straw by the gardener when he made them ready for winter. In some places of the kind, for instance in the squirrel's nest, there is undoubtedly real animal warmth and coziness. Fish seek the deepest parts of pools, where the temperature of the water is a little above freezing, and where it remains very near this point until spring.

Perhaps the funniest of all preparers for winter is the skunk. His serene highness calmly walks into a woodchuck's burrow, and says to himself—for he has no friends: "What 's the use of working when you can get some one else to make everything ready for your winter?" And he calmly takes possession and settles down



"HIS SERENE HIGHNESS CALMLY WALKS INTO A WOODCHUCK'S BURROW."



POSITION OF FLOWER BUD.

In late autumn or early winter it is well advanced for next spring's opening. The two long leaves you may find turned dark in color, or even retaining their green in protected situations.

A WOODLAND SECRET.

THE contents of buds picked in late autumn or early winter woods are full of surprises, and we often gather spring flowers without knowing it.

The bud of the aromatic wild ginger, which grows in damp, rich woods, holds a secret for us under the leaf-mold. If you pull up the spicy roots in the fall, you will find a flat mitten-shaped bud between each pair of long-stemmed leaves. When the coverings of the bud are carefully removed with a penknife, you can see two perfect leaves folded together. If you separate the small leaf-blades you will discover a tiny oval bud. Now this little bud contains twelve purple-tipped stamens and a six-parted stigma. Even with the naked eye you can recognize our ginger-root flower. In fact, one

might analyze this miniature ginger plant quite as well as if one had picked it in the May woods.

Perhaps you have noticed, when you gathered the wild ginger, that a number of the plants have only one leaf (Gray's Botany). If you examine a dozen buds you will see that each ginger plant starts in life equipped with two leaves. One small leaf folds completely over the other in the bud, and consequently the outer one is more exposed. This accounts for our one-leaved ginger plant.

It is interesting to soak a bud in water and remove the coverings, noting how dry the little leaves are kept by their waterproof coverings, which remind one of small leather mittens.

W. C. KNOWLES.



"WILD GINGER AS WE FOUND IT IN MAY OR JUNE."

? "BECAUSE WE
WANT TO KNOW"
???????????????

St. Nicholas
Union Square,
New York

RULE 1. State carefully all details pertaining to the matter about which you inquire, or desire to tell others. For the identification of insects or plants, send the whole specimen. If the object is an insect, state where you found it, what it was doing, and on what plant it was feeding. If it is a plant, send it all, unless it is too large. In that case a branch with flower and leaves will answer. A single dried blossom or dead leaf may be recognized if the plant is a common one, but it is better to send the whole specimen.

RULE 2. Inclose stamped and self-addressed envelope if reply is desired by mail. We have space to publish very few such inquiries, and only those that are of general interest. Stamps must also accompany a request for the return of specimens. Write your address in full, with street and number when necessary, on your letter, on your envelope, and on the box containing the object.

RULE 3. Answers to questions from parents or teachers will be made only by mail, in stamped and self-addressed envelope. A letter "dictated" by a boy or a girl and written by a teacher or a parent cannot be published. A letter for publication giving information or stating observations, must be composed and written by the boy or the girl whose name is signed to it. The writer's age must be given, and the whole indorsed by the parent or the teacher, who must thus guarantee its originality. Letters of inquiry need not be so indorsed, but should state the age of the writer.

PERSONAL.

TO THE YOUNG FOLKS: Please read the foregoing rules regarding letters to Nature and Science. Now read them again. Then please observe them in all your letters to me.

Kindly remember that the editor invites you to state your observations for the benefit of others, and that he will gladly give information whenever it is really desired. He welcomes puzzling queries, but does not enjoy being questioned where, from the nature of the case, a solution is impossible or will benefit no one.

Take Rule 1, for instance. Bird descriptions are often received that will not apply to any known bird. In other letters the description is not sufficiently detailed or explicit. "I saw a bird eating seeds. It had a dark head and a sweet song. What is its name?" The editor does not know. Or take this: "I saw a plant with just one stem and three leaves that were round. They were close to the ground." No further description was given and no inquiry made. Again, "I inclose a leaf that I picked. Please tell me what it is." Sometimes it is possible to do this, but in all cases you will lighten the editor's labors if you will send more of the plant.

A large number of letters are received. Some are accompanied by packages. When the full address is not put on the package, it is

often impossible to decide which belongs to which. This makes it difficult to puzzle out the letter that goes with the package. With many packages by every mail, some of them to accompany letters received a day or two before, the puzzle becomes intricate, and might be easily avoided if our correspondents would heed this rule.

"Please answer in the next number of *St. Nicholas*; I want to know as soon as possible," is a request often received. A stamped and addressed envelope will take the information to you at once.

Now one more request: Please do a little "missionary work" by sending to the editor of this department the addresses of all your young friends that do not have *St. Nicholas* and yet are interested in some phase of nature or science. I want this department to be of the greatest good to the greatest number. Please help me to do this.

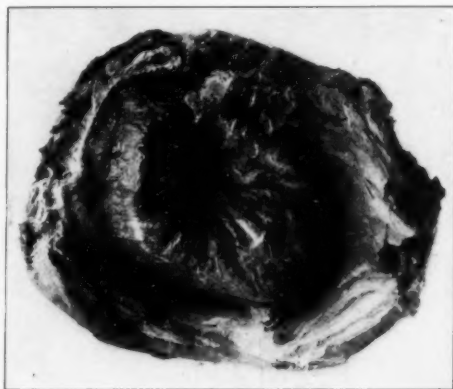
Yours cordially,

EDITOR OF NATURE AND SCIENCE.

THE SCAR OF A BRANCH.

NEGAUNEE, MICH.

DEAR *St. Nicholas*: By this same mail I have sent a package containing a piece of wood with a growth in



SCAR OF A BRANCH.

the center. Will you please tell me what the growth in the center is? It was knocked off a piece of split hard wood last October or November.

Your interested reader,

CHARLES E. YATES.

A branch of a tree forms a cylinder of wood in the main part across the annual layers. If

the branch is cut off, or dies and breaks off because the shade was too dense or because the branches above took its sap-food, then the main part of the tree endeavors to cover it up by surrounding growth.

If the branch-portion in the main trunk decays, we have a hole to be occupied by woodpeckers, squirrels, bats, etc. Boards show a knot wherever there was the stub of a branch in the main trunk. If the knot falls out, it leaves a knot-hole. Professor Bergen tells us:

If the branch dies long before the tree does, the knot may be buried under many rings of wood. What is known as clear lumber is obtained from trees that have grown in a dense forest, so that the lower branches of the larger trees were killed by the shade many years before the tree was felled.

In pruning fruit-trees or shade-trees the branches which are removed should be cut close to the trunk. If this is done, the growth of the trunk will bury the scar before decay sets in.

The accompanying illustration, from a photograph of the specimen sent by the writer of the letter, shows this scar of the branch which the surrounding tissue is trying to bury.

WHITE ROBIN WITH RED BREAST.

MIDDLEBURY, IND.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I noticed in your August number an account of a white robin. We had a white robin here a few years ago. Its breast was red, and it had two black spots on its back. The rest of its body was perfectly white. Its mate was a common robin. They were here one summer, and it is not known what became of them. The white robin was quite tame. Their nest was in a tree across the street from the school-house, and every day people came to see the white robin.

Your interested reader,

CLARA STUTZ.

WHAT IS A SNOWBIRD?

RIGA, N. Y.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have seen, a number of times, flocks of birds that people call snowbirds. They are a little larger than the English sparrow and have white breasts. They are not very wild, but let you get quite near them, and then run very fast. Are they a distinct bird in themselves, or a bird that stays here all the year, but whose plumage changes in winter? There is a large flock, where I go to school, of about three hundred, which we see quite often.

RICHARD CHURCH, JR.

General or family names are in most common use because they save seeing and distinguishing.

The term "snowbird" is applied to a variety of birds associated with the snow. I have heard the young folks, after pelting others with snow, say jokingly: "You're pretty-looking 'snowbirds'!" So you see there's almost no limit to the application of the word "snowbird." Perhaps the snowbird—that is, the best-known bird to which the word is applied—is the junco (*Junco hiemalis*). This is probably the bird to which you refer as having a white breast. Perhaps it would be better to call it gray. The under side is white. The head, neck, and upper parts are dark slate-color; therefore this bird is sometimes called the black snowbird. The outer tail-feathers are white.



JUNCO.

Our so-called "white snowbird" is the "snowflake," "snow-bunting," etc. (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). These pretty little birds are, as Thoreau calls them, the "true spirits of the snow-storm," because they are closely associated with the driving snow. They are of a "soiled white" underneath. The upper parts are darker, with streakings of brown and black. In the arctic regions in summer they are almost white.



SNOW-BUNTING.

The redpoll (*Acanthis linaria*), that sometimes also visits us from the north, is known as the "little snowbird."

So you see that, while the word "snowbird" is applied descriptively to almost any bird in the snow, it usually means one or another of these birds, about which I advise that you read a full description in any bird-book.



REDPOLL.

LITTLE RABBITS PROTECTED BY THEIR MOTHER.

BEECHWOOD, EAST WALNUT HILLS,
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am very much interested in animals, and the other day I had a little adventure which interested me very much. Behind our house there is a hollow full of dead leaves. I was walking along carelessly when I heard a funny little noise. I looked down, and next to my foot I saw a little rabbit's nest with several rabbits in it. Before I could say anything one was gone. I looked again, and the rest of them were running. Then a little black dog saw them and ran after them, when suddenly a large rabbit bounded out of the bushes and over the dog, at the same time giving him a rap on the back with her hind legs. The dog howled and fell over, which gave the rabbits time to run away. They were cotton-tails, and I would like to know why they use their hind legs more than their front ones. Yours truly,

ABBIE INGALLS (age 10).

Of course you did n't see the mother rabbit at the nest, but she saw you, although her attention was occupied chiefly in more important matters. She was in a clump of briers at the edge of the forest watching the approach of the dog across the open field. It was then and there that she resolved what to do to that dog if he came too near her young rabbits in



THE MOTHER RABBIT.

"She was in a clump of briers at the edge of the forest watching the approach of the dog across the open field."

the forest. You soon saw (and all our young folks may see, too, from the illustration on the next page) how bravely the mother put her good resolves into action.

The rabbit's strength is chiefly in its hind legs, enabling it to make long jumps over the grass or along a narrow path in the thicket. Early attempts in this jumping are very funny. The Rev. Mr. Sharpe in "Wild Life near Home" tells us of a little one that jumped far beyond its knowledge of the art:

Molly keeps the young ones in this bed for about two weeks, after which time, if frightened, they will take to their heels. They hardly understand what their hind legs are. I saw one, that was at least a month old, jump up before a mowing-machine and bolt across the field. It was his first real scare, and the first time that he had been called upon to test his legs. It was funny. He did n't know how to use them. He made some tremendous leaps, and was so unused to the powerful spring in his hind feet that he turned several complete somersaults in the air.

He tells of a rabbit attacking a cat, as bravely, and in about the same manner, as the rabbit seen by Abbie Ingalls attacked a dog:

One day, as I was quietly picking wild strawberries on a hill, I heard a curious grunting down the side below me, then the quick *thud! thud!* of an angry rabbit. Among the bushes I caught a glimpse of rabbit ears. A fight was on.

Crouching beside a bluish spot which I knew to be a rabbit's nest was a big yellow cat. He had discovered the young ones, and was making mouths at the thought of how they would taste, when the mother's thump startled him. He squatted flat, with ears back, tail



THE YOUNG RABBITS IN THEIR NEST.

Sticking up their ears in alarm at the approach of the little girl and at the distant barking of the dog.



swelled, and hair standing up along his back, as the rabbit leaped over him. It was a glimpse of Molly's ears, as she made the jump, that I had caught. It was the beginning of the bout—only a feint by the rabbit, just to try the mettle of her antagonist.

The cat was scared, and before he got himself together Molly, with a mighty bound, was in the air again, and as she flashed over him she fetched him a stunning whack on the head that knocked him endwise. He was on his feet in an instant, but just in time to receive a stinging blow on the ear that sent him sprawling several feet down the hill. The rabbit seemed constantly in the air. Back and forth, over and over the cat she flew, and with every bound landed a terrific kick with her powerful hind feet, that was followed by a puff of yellow fur.

The cat could not stand up to this. Every particle of breath and fight was knocked out of him at about the third kick. The green light in his eyes was the light of terror. He got quickly to a bush, and ran away, else I believe that the old rabbit would have beaten him to death.

The young ones in the nest were unharmed. Molly grunted and stamped at me for looking at them; but I was too big to kick as she had just kicked the cat, and I could not be led away to chase her, as she would have led a dog.

Our Nature and Science gladly welcomes to its pages such good words for the rabbit. She has always been loved and admired by the young folks, but there has been too much of a popular tendency, shared even by experienced naturalists, to underrate her abilities. She surely has some defenses other than speed, and wit enough either to take her enemies by surprise or to elude them among the brush and fences.

"HOW BRAVELY THE MOTHER PUT HER GOOD RESOLVES INTO ACTION."



"DECEMBER." BY ERNEST CLARE, AGE 14. (GOLD BADGE.)

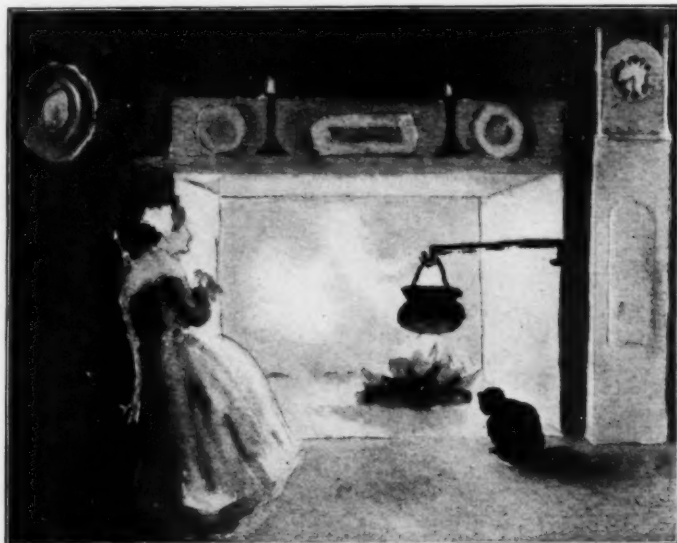
THE ST. NICHOLAS LEAGUE FOR DECEMBER.

There 's no month, after all, like old December,
Who brings us back the skating and the snow;
The evening group about the ruddy ember,
The lamplight's mellow glow;
The quiet joy of whispered preparation,
The mystery that hovers everywhere;
The eager, yet subdued, anticipation—
The *Christmas* in the air;

The holy eve, its ancient gladness bringing,
The gentle saint expected all so soon—
The row of stockings from the mantel swinging
Since early afternoon.
The time is nigh—Jack Frost has sent a warning
To banish care from many lands and seas:
I found upon my window-pane this morning
A grove of Christmas trees.

AMONG the drawings this month was one from a little girl in France (her name is on the roll of honor), showing how French children set out their shoes on Christmas eve, and how the naughty ones receive switches instead of presents. It was a good drawing, but really too sad to use. It can't be possible that any little boy or girl ever did really and truly find a bundle of switches in a Christmas stocking, or even in a Christmas shoe. The editor remembers hearing of such things—always spoken in a voice of solemn warning during the weeks just before the holiday season, when there seemed to be need of warnings and solemn words; but never, oh never, did Santa Claus really bring those switches! The editor does not wish to believe that Santa Claus ever makes any switches. Just think how it would look to see the merry old saint, who has the biggest and tenderest heart in the world, putting aside his work on a doll or a sled to trim up a bundle of switches

—tough, cruel switches to put into the stocking of some happy-hearted little boy who had forgotten that he had ever been bad, who had hung up his stocking at least



"DECEMBER." BY REBECCA McDOUGALL, AGE 16. (GOLD BADGE.)

two hours before bedtime, and then sat down to watch it and dream of the wonderful things that he would find in it next morning! Switches in a stocking? or in a little French boy's shoe? Never! Old Santa is n't that kind of a saint, and, besides, he could n't grow switches at the North Pole if he tried.

PRIZE-WINNERS, COMPETITION No. 36.

IN making the awards, contributors' ages are considered.

VERSE. Cash prize, Hilda B. Morris (age 14), 611 Spring St., Michigan City, Ind.

Gold badge, May H. Ryan (age 12), 280 S. 3d St., San Jose, Cal.

Silver badges, Maud Dudley Shackelford (age 13), 300 Main St., Tarboro, N. C., and Mary B. Bloss (age 10), 712 Edmond St., St. Joseph, Mo.

PROSE. Gold badges, Lorraine Roosevelt (age 15), Waldeck, Oyster Bay, L. I., and Luther Dana Fernald (age 16), West New Brighton, N. Y.

Silver badges, Margarete Münsterberg (age 13), 7 Ware St., Cambridge, Mass., Earl D. Van Deman (age 15), 158 W. Central Ave., Delaware, Ohio, and Jessica Biddle (age 9), 348 Central Park W., New York City.

DRAWING. Gold badges, Ernest Clare (age 14), 623 Givens St., Toronto, Can., and Rebecca McDougall (age 16), 302 Sumner St., Buffalo, N. Y.

Silver badges, Emily Grace Hanks (age 15), 560 W. 113th St., New York City, Katharine E. Butler (age 11), address missing, and Vera Belle Hoskinson (age 6), Not-tawa, Mich.

PHOTOGRAPHY. Gold badge, Chandler W. Ireland (age 14), 21 Virginia St., Dorchester, Mass.

Silver badges, Philip S. Ordway (age 15), 20 Myrtle St., Winchester, Mass., and W. Caldwell Webb (age 7), Sharon Hill, Delaware Co., Pa.

WILD-ANIMAL AND BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY. First Prize, "Sea-gulls," by Levis W. Minford, Jr. (age 12), 106 Wall St., New York City. Second prize, "Squirrel," by Eleanor Houston Hill (age 8), 1102 Grove St., Evanston, Ill. Third Prize, "Young Rabbits," by F. J. Trebase (age 15), Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis, Mo.

PUZZLE-MAKING. Gold badges, Priscilla Lee (age 14), 63 N. Franklin St., Wilkes Barre, Pa., and T. Lawrason Riggs (age 14), 1311 Massachusetts Ave., Washington, D. C.

Silver badges, Hannah T. Thompson (age 13), Box 471, Pasadena, Cal., and Howard Hosmer (age 11), Nashville, Ill.

PUZZLE-ANSWERS. Gold badges, Edward McKey Very (age 15), 28 Monadnock Road, Newton Center, Mass., and Robert Porter Crow (age 11), Shelby City, Ky.

VOL. XXX.—23.

Silver badges, Katharine Hooper (age 13), "Meadowbank," Kippington, Sevenoaks, Kent, England, and Mildred D. Yenawine (age 13), 2228 N St., W., Washington, D. C.

WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES.

BY HILDA B. MORRIS (AGE 14).

(Cash Prize.)

FALL softly, ye clinging snowflakes, and change the world to white,
And hide its stains, and make it pure: for the Christ is born to-night!
Ye stars, shine out in glory, and shed a holy light,
And flood the world with silver rays: for the Christ is born to-night!

O moaning winds of winter, stay in your course, be still!

Till the Christmas bells the tidings tell of peace and God's good will.

And tossing, restless branches, bend low
o'er the icebound rill,
And wait till a whisper passes: "The Christ is born! Good will!"

Then bells that bring glad tidings, ring out!
Ring loud! Ring long!

Lift up your golden voices
to join the world's great song.

'T is a hymn of grand rejoicing to hail the Saviour's birth;

O wild winds, carry the sound away to the uttermost parts of the earth!

A LITTLE JOURNEY UNDER WATER.

(A True Story.)

BY LUTHER DANA FERNALD (AGE 16).

(Gold Badge.)

ONCE upon a time there lived a boy who bore the name of Fred. All boys have the "daring" spirit in a more or less degree. Fred had it in a "more" degree, and the distinction between it and foolhardiness was not always very clear. He was a good swimmer, and so, tiring of swimming in shallow water, he often made trips up and down the river. On one of these trips he noticed an old water-logged stump four or five feet below the water. Upon investigation he found there was a hole in it about the size of his body. No one, to his knowledge, had ever been through that hole. He resolved to attempt it; and so, without telling any one his intention, he dove down and swam into the hole. All went well until he was half-way through, when he found he could go no farther. He tried to go back, but found he could neither go backward nor forward. In vain he struggled; nothing seemed gained. One thinks fast under water, and short as the breath of life is, Fred thought of many things. No one would know where he had gone or what had become of him. The



"DECEMBER." BY EMILY GRACE HANKS, AGE 15. (SILVER BADGE.)

river might be dragged, but, hidden in the sunken stump, his body probably never would be found. He thought of the father and mother and sisters at home—no, it must not be! His father's fathers had died in

A JOURNEY FROM SORRENTO TO AMALFI.

BY LORRAINE ROOSEVELT (AGE 15).

(Gold Badge.)



"SEPTEMBER DAYS." BY CHANDLER W. IRELAND, AGE 14. (GOLD BADGE.)

battle, and if he were to die he should die fighting. He struggled till he felt he could stand it no longer, and then struggled some more. Then he felt himself moving, slowly. A last desperate effort, and he was through. Gasping, he reached the surface. He had done what no one else had done, but what *he* never wanted to do again.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY MAY H. RYAN (AGE 12).

(Gold Badge.)

I 'm weary of the leaden sky,
I do not like the rain;
I wish the dragging months would fly
And bring me June again.

'T is vain to wish—I 'll sigh no more;
For hark! how loud the wind!
It sweeps against the bolted door
And shakes the window-blind!

'T is cold without. The blaze so warm
Leaps up the fireplace.
How dreadful to be in the storm,
The elements to face!

But then, when all is still and white,
And all the storm is o'er,
And when the sky is cleared and bright,
I 'll like the winter more.

Every ST. NICHOLAS reader is entitled
to League membership, free.

SORRENTO! — AMALFI!
What is there about these names that makes them magical, that brings to the imagination a delirious sense of joy and beauty? Italy is as wonderful in its fertility as was the Garden of Hesperides, and the harbor of Naples is the center of its beauty.

Beyond Sorrento, toward Amalfi, stretches a range of olive-clad hills, soft and silvery in color except where a grove of pines or a vineyard or perhaps a group of tall trees of yellowish hue breaks into the mass of olives. The road runs along the very edge of the bay. Now and then the great cliffs are so perpendicular that the dazzling water is within a stone's-throw. Everywhere there is richness of coloring. The rocks with their ragged beauty, the trees, the water, the sky, even the sand and the earth, seem more brilliant here than elsewhere. This is the land of the gods,

where Apollo sang and Minerva wandered. The sea-nymphs lived at the foot of the cliffs, lifting their sweet voices above the noise of the breaks. The poetry of those ages still lingers about the place, and the tumbling waves, blue as the heavens above them, still sweep landward with the memory of past songs.

There is a splendor of coloring in these sunshine countries that is marvelous, and the eternal spring and summer is dreamlike. Far above the water and above



"SEPTEMBER DAYS." BY W. CALDWELL WEBB, AGE 7. (SILVER BADGE.)

the little town of Amalfi is an old Capuchin convent. The garden is full of bright flowers, and the white plaster pergola, winding along the hillside, is covered with climbing roses whose fragrance and wealth of blossoms are almost overwhelming. All around were Italian flowers whose names I do not know, but whose splendor was regal. And even more beautiful than all this is the abundance of roses, white and red, pink and deep strawberry-color; a few are cream-colored with orange tips, for eons ago the sunset rays kissed these blossoms and made them blush.

To enter the land of poetry, to go through a great garden of olives and vineyards, oranges and flowers and fragrant roses, to see the sun throw his last loving rays toward the hills ere he sinks into the sea, to watch the purple mists sink slowly over Capri and rise again at dawn—what more can one desire? Nature smiles on us and we are glad.

THE DANDELION-SEED'S JOURNEY.

BY JESSICA BIDDLE (AGE 9).

(Silver Badge.)

ONCE in a grassy field there grew a dandelion—just a simple yellow every-day dandelion, left blooming long after all her companions had faded away.

The summer waned, and the solitary dandelion still bloomed in lonely beauty. One day the dandelion felt lighter, and lo! all her yellow petals had suddenly withered, and there she stood in a fuzzy gray suit. One by one the kind wind lifted the little winged seeds gently and sped them away to distant lands.



"SEPTEMBER DAYS." BY MARGUERITE VAN TAMBACHT, AGE 14.

The last tiny seed floated away on the warm air, glorying in the golden sunshine.

At length the wind stopped, and the tiny seed-boat fell gently into a running brooklet. On, on it sailed, past green forests and golden fields of grain.

As the brook flowed on it widened and became a mighty river. The dandelion-seed trembled as it beheld huge ships sail noiselessly over the blue waters, or vast steamers puff noisily along. At length, just as it reached a great city, the wind came and lifted the seed-let in his great arms and bore it far beyond the river and the city.

High in the air the wind guided the tiny seed on, until it seemed as if they would enter the azure vault of heaven.

After many days the wind subsided, and the dande-



"SEPTEMBER DAYS." BY PHILIP S. ORDWAY, AGE 15.
(SILVER BADGE.)

lion-ship dropped slowly downward till it reached the soft, kind earth. Then a strange thing happened, for the earth closed over the seed, burying it in her moist bosom.

Months passed, and one day the seed burst its brown shell and shot upward through the rich soil. First a little green sprout and then a dandelion joyfully greeted the warm sunshine.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY MAUD DUDLEY SHACKELFORD (AGE 13).

(Silver Badge.)

THE sun shines warm and bright again,
The days are long and fair;
And fragrant flowers blossoming
Perfume the balmy air.
The brook is rippling forth its song,
The birds sing blithe and gay—
A welcome to the summer-time,
And warm, sweet, sunny day.
The children play beneath the trees,
And o'er the meadows run,
With hearts of merry gladness, for
Vacation has begun.

The earth is bare and dead and cold
Beneath stern winter's reign;
The wind is whistling through the trees:
December's come again.
And o'er the city floats the sound
Of sweet cathedral chimes;
The earth has donned its robe of snow
To greet the Christmas times.
And out upon a world of white
In splendor shines the sun,
And all is glad; for now, once more,
Vacation has begun.

Every ST. NICHOLAS reader should be a League member, every League member should belong to a chapter, and every chapter should take part in the big competition.

A JOURNEY THROUGH A SUNK- EN CITY.

BY MARGARETE MÜNSTER-
BERG (AGE 13).

(Silver Badge.)

A THUNDER-SHOWER was overhead. The Titisee in the Black Forest was tossing about Peter's fishing-boat. No fishes would come. Peter was cold and forlorn. He looked into the gurgling waters. Something seemed to draw him like a magnet from beneath, to force his boat down, down! All was black and cold, and the water was whirling around him. Suddenly something sparkling would shoot past him—it was only a fish! Gradually the water grew clearer, and the dizzy boy could distinguish steeples and towers gleaming from below. Soon his boat touched the lake-bottom. Peter leaped out dazed; he was in a city. He traversed the streets, consisting of majestic stone mansions with turrets, towers, and strange inscriptions. Before each stood an armed guard, unmoved as if frozen. In the streets, yeomen with drawn bows, knights on palfreys—all were fixed statues.

Peter entered the largest castle. Cold magnificence marked the wide halls, but the crowned figure on the throne and all his courtiers were under the same spell. Hesitatingly Peter ascended a narrow staircase leading to the chapel. There the sexton stood, his numb hands holding the rope of a big bell. Peter pulled the string, and lo! an enchanting peal rang over the city, the more marvelous because the bell called out:

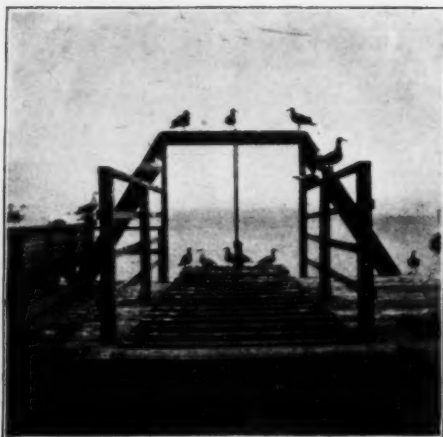
"The city Vineta, sunken for its misdeeds, wakeneth to life."

The sexton shook himself and mumbled thanks to Peter, and when the bewildered lad reentered the throne-room, it was filled with gallant knights and graceful ladies, surrounding the monarch, who rose to thank Peter for wakening his city from its hundred years' trance.

"I'll make thee mine heir," said the king, "and thou shalt have all the riches thou canst desire."

"No," Peter replied; "I ask but one boon. Make me your sexton, and let me ring the enchanted bell every night at sunset, so that my brethren of the upper world may hear the warning tale of the sunken city."

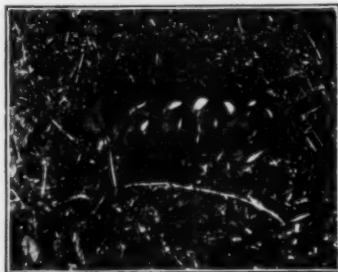
The king consented.



"SEA-GULLS." BY LEVIS W. MINFORD, JR., AGE 12.
(FIRST PRIZE, "WILD-BIRD PHOTOGRAPH.")



"SQUIRREL." BY ELEANOR HOUSTON HILL,
AGE 8. (SECOND PRIZE, "WILD-ANIMAL
PHOTOGRAPH.")



"YOUNG RABBITS." BY F. J. TREHASE, AGE 15.
(THIRD PRIZE, "WILD-ANIMAL
PHOTOGRAPH.")

The fishermen around the Titisee wondered where Peter tarried. The next morning they found a wrecked boat on the shore, and wondered no more. But often at sunset, when they threw out their nets, they would hear a faint voice chanting the fate of Vineta—and because of that warning toll, it is said, the village by the Titisee is the best and most prosperous in the Black Forest.

HOW SANTA CLAUS SHALL JOURNEY.

BY EARL D. VAN DEMAN
(AGE 15).

(Silver Badge.)

DEAR girls and boys of ST. NICHOLAS, old Santa Claus has told me a delightful secret, and with his especial permission I shall whisper it to you, if you will promise—cross your heart!—never, never to tell. All the long summer, while you and I have been enjoying our vacation, thousands of fairies and nimble elves from the ice palaces of the far north were at work on a wonderful system of locomotion, by which Santa Claus plans to arrive at our homes this Christmas eve more quickly and with a larger supply of toys than ever. As you well know, he has tried many experiments with quick-transit machines, such as air-ships, automobiles, lightning-express trains, etc., but they all have proved unsuccessful. Now, however, he has had constructed a pneumatic tube, which, although invisible to mortal eye, extends from his factories and palaces at the North Pole to every house where he shall stop this year.

A brief description of this strange affair I am sure will interest you. It is, so he says, about a foot and a half in diameter, and all that is necessary to start him to lie flat in a conical-shaped projectile, press a button, and—whir-r-r—he is in the room, beside your stocking. The toys are sent after him through the tube as he needs them, saving him the trouble of carrying a heavy pack.

The system is now all completed but the connecting of the branch tubes to our chimneys, open windows, and doors. These were so left for a purpose, as you shall find out. All the boys and girls who shall be good till the day before Christmas, from now on, shall on that very day have the tube connected to their homes; but all who are disobedient shall find that Santa will not pay them a visit.

A JOURNEY.

BY DOROTHY ELIZABETH TRUE (AGE 11).

ON May 1, 1859, a family of five started overland from Minnesota across the plains to California. They rode in two covered wagons, and pulling them were eight yoke of oxen, and four cows to give milk.

One day, as they were journeying along, one of the little girls saw some flowers, and would not wait for the wagon to stop; before they could catch her she jumped, and her leg caught in the wheel and it was broken. They got driftwood from the Platte River, from which they made splints, and her father set it. In a month's time she was able to walk again.

One morning, as they were eating breakfast in a clump of willows, they found that they were surrounded by four Indians with war-paint on. They said they had just killed a buffalo and would like to trade some meat for sugar, biscuits, and tobacco. The people very gladly gave them what they wanted, all but the tobacco, which they did not have. The next day, they told them, they would meet a thousand Indian warriors on ponies, which they did. These Indians were Sioux Indian scouts, who were looking for their enemy, the Pawnee tribe.

There was a young boy in the party who always liked to go ahead, and one afternoon, as they neared the Humboldt River, he was surprised to see a big gray wolf looking at him. They looked at each other a few seconds,—it seemed hours to the boy,—and then the wolf disappeared in the sage-brush. The boy kept with the party after that, and did not go ahead any more. They reached California on the birthday of the boy, October 15, 1859. Their cattle remaining was a cow and an ox; the others died from drinking alkali water.

This journey is true, as that young boy is my father.

ONE SUMMER JOURNEY.

BY ANNA E. GILKYNON (AGE 13).

THERE is one journey I will always remember all my life. That is a trip we took to Longfellow's home in Portland, Maine.

It is a quaint house standing close to the street, and looks strangely out of place in comparison with the modern buildings surrounding it.

On the door is an old brass knocker, dull from the use of many hands.

As you knock you almost expect a little maid to appear and drop a curtsy; but the dream vanishes as you discover instead a keeper who offers to show you through the house.

On the landing in the hall stands "the old clock on

the stairs," which still ticks on "forever, never—never, forever."

In Longfellow's study stands his old leather chair, and near is an old student-lamp that has lighted how many of his poems?

On the wall there hangs a picture of his three little daughters. One of them is "laughing Allegra," who seems to invite the whole world to laugh with her, and another is Alice the "Edith with golden hair."

From the study the garden can be seen—such a quaint old garden, overgrown with tangles of grape-vine, and hidden away in shady nooks are lilies-of-the-valley hidden by their own leaves.

Near the study door is the old ivy still clinging to the moldering wall, and it, too, looks as if after a few years it will molder and crumble to dust.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY MARY B. BLOSS (AGE 10).

(Silver Badge.)

THE holidays come in December,
And fill every heart with joy;
And Santa comes round with his presents
For each little girl and boy.

The wind blows through the tree-tops,
The birds have flown far away;
The snow falls thick and heavy
For Santa's dear old sleigh.

The turkey 's in the oven,
The pumpkin 's in the pie;
And such a merry Christmas
I never yet did spy.

A JOURNEY ON THE CANAL.

BY JEAN O. EVANS (AGE 12).

LATE one afternoon a little girl found herself on board a canal-boat. She was to spend her summer vacation there, and was glad of it.

She ran in the cabin and started to look about. There was a dining-room which was of medium size, and shut off from that was a small kitchen. Back of these rooms was a large room which had folding-doors running through it, making

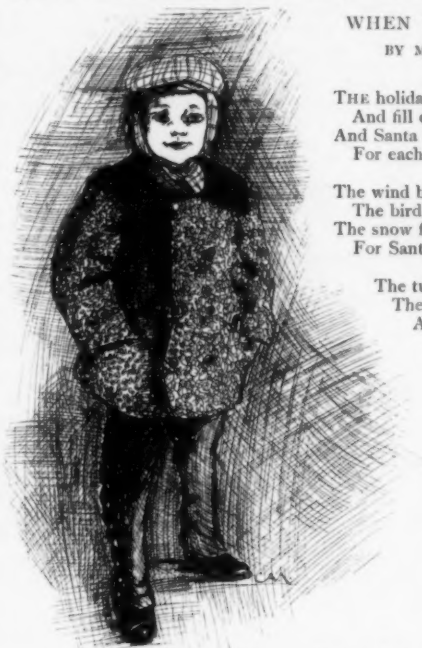
it into two long, narrow rooms. Everything was as clean as could be, and the little girl thought the cabin very nice.

She went up on deck again, and found that a tug had come and the boat was going to start soon. She seated herself on top of the cabin and watched the men work.

Soon she was called to supper, and the boat started while they were eating.

That night she saw the different-colored lights on the river and in the city. The little girl thought them very beautiful, but one attracted her attention more than the rest. It was an advertisement of soap made in blue, red, and yellow lights, and it certainly did look very pretty.

The next morning the child slept late, and when she was dressed and had eaten her breakfast she found



The King of December.

BY CHARLOTTE MORTON, AGE 16.



"DECEMBER." BY MARJORY ANNE HARRISON, AGE 14.

from it flying on the deck. It blew a hatch, that takes four men to lift, into the canal, and the next day she saw that along the canal the wind had taken the roofs off of houses. All too soon the girl arrived in Buffalo, and in a short time she found herself at her home in New York.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY CLARA FULLER (AGE 7).

WHEN Christmas eve does come,
And the Christmas tree put there,
I am glad to see it glow
With all the things so fair.
And I say: "Good night, good night
To the pretty Christmas tree;
Stand there till morning time,
My pretty Christmas tree."

So it stood there till the morning;
I said, "Thank you, little tree."
But one thing I did n't like of him:
He did n't play with me.
But he gave me all the toys,
That little Christmas tree;
And Santa gave me some
From the pretty Christmas tree.

A JOURNEY WITHOUT SUCCESS.

BY GLADYS HODSON (AGE 13).

TO ANY WISE PERSON: I am a little gray kitten named Theodore Roosevelt, but I am called "Teddy."
The other day I was sleeping in my mistress's lap, when suddenly I opened my eyes, and there sat another cat, looking at me. This cat was gray also, exactly my size, and every time I moved he moved too.
This seemed very funny.

that the tug had left, and the boat was being pulled by mules. The first lock they came to, she waited until the water rushed in and the boat was even with the top of the lock, and then she stepped off and walked with the man who drove the mules. She picked flowers on the way, and had a real nice time; but she was glad to get on the boat at the next lock, for she had walked three miles.

The days passed very quickly for the child, with walking and picking flowers, and at last one afternoon a storm came. The wind blew the awning down and sent the wood

I got up and went behind the frame, but the cat was gone. I thought I must have driven it away, and so I lay down again. But, when I looked up, there was that cat again. I growled; the other cat opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

I have journeyed around the frame several times, but no cat is there.

Can you explain this?

Please answer as soon as possible.

TEDDY.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY MARGUERITE M. HILLERY (AGE 15).

WHEN each bright summer day has passed quickly away,

And the leaves on the trees turned to golden and red,
When the sweet flowers die, and the cold north winds sigh,

Ah, then we will mourn, for the summer has fled.

But though we may mourn for a summer that's gone,
And sigh for the time when the field flowers grow,
Dame Nature's fair hand o'er the face of the land

Has sprinkled a garment of crystal and snow.

Thus o'er rivers and lakes fall the glittering flakes,
While over the plains sweep the winds that benumb,
And the sleigh-bells ring clear with a merry good cheer,
For we always feel gay when the holidays come.

A JOURNEY UP THE MONUMENT.

BY W. N. COUPLAND (AGE 15).

I NEED hardly say that the monument was erected to commemorate the great fire of London, and that it stands on what is now known as Fish Street Hill. The day I went up it is still fresh in my memory. Near the monument is the Billingsgate Fish Market, with its network of

crooked streets, and the varied and unpleasant smells of fish which always hang about them. As I ascended the dimly lighted stairway, the rumble of traffic and the shouts of men began to melt away into silence, until the voices of people above and below me on the spiral stairway became plainly audible. As I made my way up the steps, worn by the tread of thousands of feet, I wondered how many members of the League had passed up and down. The way was dimly lighted by an occasional gas-jet, and at intervals there were narrow windows, whence one might get a glimpse of the streets as they became more



"DECEMBER." BY LOIS D. WILCOX, AGE 13.

and more distant. At length I arrived at the top, and came out into the air again. Up there the air was very different from the close atmosphere of the crowded streets, now two hundred feet below. The first thing that took my attention was the Tower Bridge, with its great bascule opening to allow of the passage of some big ship. On the opposite side rose the huge smoke-blackened dome of St. Paul's, and away to the left was Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, misty and indistinct, but quite unmistakable. These were the only big buildings I could recognize; the rest was one confused mass of houses stretching away as far as the eye could see, with here and there a church spire rising above the general level. All the mingled sounds of a busy city came up faintly from below, and vans and carts had dwindled away until they looked no bigger than toys. Presently the sun came out and lighted up the scene, and a passing cloud threw a gigantic shadow which moved steadily over the wilderness of housetops. As I returned I counted the steps; and, if my counting be correct, they were three hundred ten.

A JOURNEY.

BY RALPH BLACKLEDGE (AGE 10).

THE most pleasant journey I ever took was the one to Santa Catalina Island. We took the steamer at San Pedro and sailed out on the Pacific Ocean. This was my first ocean voyage, and how I loved to sit on the deck and watch the sea-gulls and the flying-fish skimming along over the waves! After some hours we saw the island, like a many-peaked mountain-cap, rising out of the sea.

In the afternoon we took a sail-boat and went out to the Seal Rocks, where we saw so many, many brown seals. Off the coast near San Francisco we saw the striped

seaweeds growing at the bottom, so tall they almost touched our boat. Bright fishes, gold, olive, blue, red, and brown ones, swam over the rocks and shells, darting among the seaweed. What fun divers must have! I did not know they could see so well under the water.



BY KATHARINE E. BUTLER, AGE 11. (SILVER BADGE.)

One morning we got up very early and watched the fishermen returning with their boats full of fish. They had been out all night. Then we had our breakfast right there on the beach, with the sea-breezes blowing in our faces. And oh, how good the fresh fried mackerel and hot coffee tasted there!



"DECEMBER." BY VERA BELLE HOSKINSON, AGE 6.
(SILVER BADGE.)

ribbon-seals, and I remembered that somebody once said, in ST. NICHOLAS, that they were very rare.

One day we took a long, delightful tramp to the other side of the island. We carried a splendid lunch, and brought back beautiful shells and seaweed, starfish, and sea-urchins.

But the best of all was a ride in a glass-bottomed boat. We could gaze down through the clear water for a hundred feet and see the beautiful many-colored

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY HAROLD R. NORRIS (AGE 9).

WHEN the holidays come we get our sleds,
And down the hills we go;
While past us double rippers shoot,
Over the sparkling snow.

And now with skates upon our feet
We skim across the pond,
And swifter, swifter with each stroke,
We gain the shore beyond.

On Christmas eve, before we sleep,
Our stockings by the fire
We hang for Santa Claus to fill,
And grant our best desire.

A WONDERFUL DAY IN OUR JOURNEY TO THE YOSEMITE.

With Photograph by the Author.

BY MARY HOWELL (AGE 11).

A PARTY of us left the Big Tree Junction on the main Yosemite road, on horseback, at about nine o'clock, to spend the day among the big trees. After a steep ride of four miles we reached the grove, to see such immense trees that we never could forget them. They

are certainly wonderful and very beautiful; there is no question about that. Their bark has a beautiful golden-brown tint when the sun shines on them, and in the shadow they are a rich red-brown.

When we reached the Grizzly Giant, which is said to be the largest tree in the world, and is one hundred four feet in circumference, we got several pictures. Then we took a spool of thread, which we had brought for the purpose, and while one person held the end another carried it entirely around the tree. Then we picked up pieces of bark (because there are rules against any one taking the bark from the trees), and wound the thread around them. After we each had taken our one



WAWONA, ONE OF THE YOSEMITE TREES.

hundred four feet of thread, we went on to the upper grove, and ate our lunch near a spring of ice-cold water in front of the guardian's log cabin.

After lunch we took a picture of the Fallen Monarch, and then went on to Wawona Point, where the view is beautiful and the elevation is seven thousand one hundred forty feet.

All of the largest trees have names, such as Texas, Mariposa, Wawona, California, Grizzly Giant, General Lee, General Grant, and so many others that I cannot remember them.

The California and the Wawona are cut out so that the road can go through them. And there is another tree, called the Telescope, that people can go into and look up and see the sky through the center of the tree, and it still has green leaves on it.

There was a forest fire in the Big Tree Grove, before the trees were discovered, which injured most of them, and one four or five years ago which scorched the Grizzly Giant.

After we had seen all of the trees, we went back to our camp at the Big Tree Junction, where the cook had prepared a fine supper for us.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY FRANCES PAINE (AGE 10).

WHEN the holidays come
We have not a sum
Nor a lesson to do,
So we go to the zoo;
And on bright Christmas day
We do nothing but play.
But the morning will come
When, with books and a plum,
We shall run off to school
Through the snow-fields so cool.

WHEN THE HOLIDAYS COME.

BY MABEL STARK (AGE 14).

CHRISTMAS has come with all the joys
It ever has brought to me;
Yet as I look at the dainty gifts
I ponder on what might be.
I sigh as I think of the homeless ones,
The wretched, the weak, the poor;
'T is often that we should think of these
As we rest in our homes secure.

Let all our homes this Christmas-tide
Be full of the merriest cheer;
A generous spirit now pervade
The close of the dying year!
And hearts that oft are sad and drear
Now happy and gay may be,
As a last farewell to the closing year
And a greeting to nineteen three!

FIELDS OF SUMMER-TIME.

BY DORIS FRANCKLYN (AGE 15).

SUNLIT fields of jewel'd flowers,
Happy birds that sweetly trill,
Memories of my childhood's hours
Fondly linger round you still!

Daisies with their upturned faces
Flash in frames of diamond dew;
Daffodils, with airy graces,
Hide sweet violets from view.

Crimson poppies, boldly vying
With the buttercups of gold,
While the waving grass is sighing,
Full of mystery untold.

Surely sun will always glisten!
Surely birds chant songs supreme!
Surely I 'll be there to listen—
Childish, happy, foolish dream!

OVER THE HILLS.

BY ALICE MAY FULLER (AGE 17).

OVER the hills and far away
The lasses are longing to roam,
With the dancing, mischievous sunset breeze
That comes from the elfins' home.

Over the hills the gold is spun
For the rollicking elfins to spread
In the merry blue of an evening sky
When the sun is going to bed.

Over the hills to the land of elves,
To the laughing land of song,
By way of the rainbow we're going some day,
As the sandman passes along.

THE EVENING.

BY JANET RUSSELL PENMAN (AGE 10).

FATHER and mother by the fireside sit,
With all the lamps around them lit.
Each of the children has gone to bed,
And on its pillow is laid each head;
While the good mother her watch she keeps,
Each of the children quietly sleeps.

All of the children have gone afar;
In the land of dreamland now they are.

Each of them dreams a dream so sweet,
If you could dream it 't would be a treat;
And still the good mother her watch she keeps
While each of the children quietly sleeps.

Great happiness dwells in a home like this;
Unselfishness always makes such bliss.
Midnight follows the evening bright;
Love reigns, and the home is full of light,
And through her dreams the mother keeps
Her watch, and each child quietly sleeps.

LEAGUE NOTES AND LETTERS.

We have the great pleasure to announce that Miss Hilda B. Morris, winner of the cash prize for verse in this issue, has had a short story accepted by Pearson's Magazine. This story, entitled "Bill's Best Beloved," was published in the October number, and is thoroughly charming in every way.

Bertie B. Register (known to the puzzlers as "Johnnie Bear"), address 344 W. Preston St., Baltimore, Md., would like a correspondent about his own age (13), and prefers one in a foreign country who admires General Lee.

Dorothy T. Biddle (age 16), 345 Central Park W., would like an English correspondent of about her own age—one who would write of English personalities and customs.

Elizabeth Bishop Bullard, 247 South St., Pittsfield, Mass. (age 17), would like a correspondent in Germany or France. Could correspond on picture postals if preferred.

Katherine M. Keeler wants to know what medium is meant by "wash" as applied to drawings. For her benefit and others, we reply that "wash" is a medium applied with a brush, or "washed in," to use the artist term. "Wash" may be a simple sepia or India ink, or it may be a combination of some tint with white, in the various shades.

Aida Borchgrevink, of Egypt, and several other far-away members have asked if the League subjects for competition could not be announced a month sooner, in order to give them time to get their work across before the closing day. This is impossible, for the reason that the subjects are not decided upon until the foregoing issue is on the press. Neither can we delay the closing day, for the reason that we have already delayed it until the last day when the printers are willing to receive the copy. We wish there was some way for members in Australia, Japan, and Egypt to enter the lists, but as matters are we do not quite see how the way can be made.

Karl Keffer's bright little paper "The Bubble" still continues to entertain and instruct. It is in its third volume, and the office is still Charlevoix, Pa.

We regret to say that the silver-badged poem about "Daddy Fox" in the September issue was not original with the little contributor, who, it seems, did not understand what "original" meant. For the benefit of others, we desire to add that an original poem or story is one that is not copied from any piece of work whatever. Neither must it be something that the contributor has heard recited; and it must be done wholly without aid from any outside source. A drawing or photograph must not be copied from any other picture, and it is always better that a drawing should be "from life" rather than from imagination. Even when the design is imaginary, it is well to have models for the figures, accessories, etc.

To several poets: "Fun" does not rhyme with "come."

Ruth Brierley, Easthampton, Mass., Box 220, would like one or two correspondents, girls of about fourteen.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: This is the last time I may write to the League as a member, because in three days I will be eighteen. And I am very sorry. But then, there is an end to all things, and one cannot be seventeen for life. I have enjoyed the League competitions so much that it will be hard to retire from the field. Still, when you are old and decrepit—are eighteen, in fact—you must retire and give the young blood a chance. And if they make good use of it, who knows

but that in time the League may become the magazine and St. NICHOLAS the preface? Though we'd none of us like to see that, for old St. Nick is good enough for us—the little ones just beginning to read, and the old ones who use glasses.

So here 's to your prosperous life until magazines are extinct.

Farewell.

DOROTHY POSEGATE.

DENVER, COL.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: To-day I received your beautiful silver badge and your good wishes, and now I feel that I am a member of the League. During the past year I have contributed almost monthly, and sometimes I felt a little discouraged that my efforts were all a failure; but now I feel deeply repaid for all my attempts, and the encouragement which your silver badge brings me will certainly make me strive for further and higher achievements.

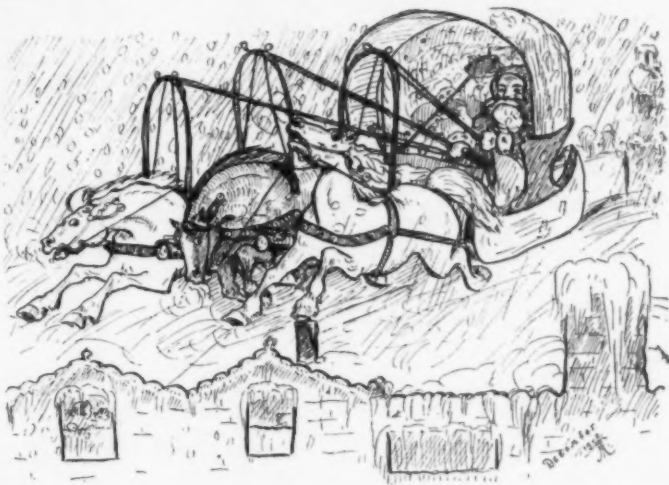
Your faithful League member,

HAZEL HYMAN.

OTHER useful and appreciative letters have been received from James D. Barton (too long to print, and not suitable for League department), Louise Richards, Winifred Jones, Eleanor Neustadter, Eleanor Clifton, Albert E. Gartside, Mrs. R. G. Sutherland, Margaret D. White, Frances Raymond, Margaret A. Fellows, Consuelo Salazar, Yvonne Jequier, William Ripley Don, Jr., Willie Koch, Elizabeth Harrison, Katherine Sharpstein, Helen C. Coombs, Margaret Hyde Beebe, Eugene White, Jr., Jessie Foster, Horace H. Underwood, Lewis W. Minford, Jr., Ruth M. Petrus, Stephen Gaffney, Stella B. Weinstein, Annie B. Briggs, M. Letitia Stockett, Elizabeth Otis, Janet Buchanan, Howard Hosmer, Beth Howard, Bessie P. Frick, Margaret Gill, Susie M. Fleming, Harold L. Platt, and Ruth Brierley.

CHAPTERS.

THIS is the last month of the big chapter entertainment competition. Those who are not already well along with their entertainment plans should not delay a moment. Remember, all reports must be in by January 3. We shall try to publish the list of winners in the March issue, instead of later, as first announced.



"DECEMBER." BY MONICA PEIRSON TURNER, AGE 14.

A good many school-teachers have kindly assisted in the formation of chapters, and in getting entertainments started. To all such the League wishes to express gratitude. Children always care more and try harder when their parents and teachers care enough to help. To any one desiring to form chapters, badges and instruction leaflets will be sent free, post-paid.

Miss Ruby Taggart, secretary of Chapter 195, address Caro, Mich., says her chapter would be glad to correspond with other chapters (ages about 14), and would particularly like to hear from foreign members.

NEW CHAPTERS.

No. 565. "Sugar Plum Chapter." Edna Krouse, President; Genevieve Mersfelder, Secretary; five members. Address, Irving Institute, 2126 California St., San Francisco, Cal.

No. 566. "The Sextet." Elsie Ritsert, President; Mildred Newman, Secretary; six members. Address, 230 E. 79th St., N. Y. City.



"A BASKET-BALL GIRL." BY ISABEL SMITH, AGE 16.

THE ROLL OF HONOR.

No. 1. A list of those whose work would have been published had space permitted.

No. 2. A list of those whose work entitles them to honorable mention and encouragement.

VERSE, 1.

Marcia Louise Webber
Madge Falcon
Alice Sachs
Bennie Naseef
Louise T. Preston
Saidee E. Kennedy
Edith Guggenheim
Edward Laurence McKinney

VERSE, 2.

Robert Strain, III.
Karin Costello
Violet I. Baker
Elsa Simonson
Louisa F. Spear
Mary Gray Runkle
Margaret Clemens
Marion E. Lane
Millicent Pond
Katheryn Macy
Bessie C. Halfoux
Robert E. Naumberg
Elizabeth M. S. Wood
Thelma Frost
Floy De Grove Baker
Mark Curtis Kinney

PROSE, 1.

Frances Marion Miller
J. M. Longyear, Jr.
Marion Prince
Elizabeth Luchars
Lowell Nicola
Eleanor S. Whipple
Jessie Catherine MacCurdy
Maurice S. White
Helen Dean Fish
Eleanor May Barker
Lucie A. Dolan
Margaret Marsh
Helen B. Sharp
M. Elizabeth Davis
Elizabeth L. Marshall
Hilda Nash
Wynonah Beazecale
Elizabeth Bacon Hutchings
Mary C. Antes
John B. Dempsey
Marjorie Patrick
Grace Reynolds Douglas
Alfreda Peel
Frank L. Hayes
John Mitchell

Freda Muriel Harrison
Gertrude May Winstone

PROSE, 2.

John Hall, Jr.
Mary P. Parsons
Mary Worthen Appleton
Bernhard R. Naumberg
Knight Rector
Ada H. Case
Alice Frances Richards
Mary Comly
Jessie Freeman Foster
Emily F. Gilbert
Helen Wynn Kennedy
Helen Meeker
Mary Cromer
Mildred L. Roberts
Josephine W. Pitman
Susy Fitz Simons
Margaret H. Bennett
Annette Howe Carpenter
Margaret Winthrop Peck
Margaret Sturges
Ethel Marion Doward
Dorothy T. Biddle
Katherine Bigelow
Dorothy Felt
Florence Lucille Hamm
Ruth Brierley
Marie Cole
Clarence C. Little
Ellen Dorothy Bach
Elise B. ver Steeg
Mary Yeula Westcott
Marjorie Murphy
Katherine D. Andrews
Elsie Plant
Aileen L. Gorgas
Ina Dryden
Christine Graham
Helen Tillotson
Rachel T. Sanborn
Laura Laurensen Byrne
Elizabeth O. Decble
Helen Hunter
H. Roswell Hawley
Irvin C. Poley
Hazel La Rue
Robert J. Abbott
Pringle McCraven
Adelaide Lucile Flagler
Fitz-Hugh B. Marshall
Helen L. Jelliffe
Elizabeth Runkle Bryant

Clara P. Pond
Theodora Van Wagenen
Muriel Parker
Briar Scott
Marjorie Macgregor
Ralph Duysters
Willford L. Spencer
Klaire Hasgall
Susan W. Wilbur
Frances Renee Despard
Grace Olive Tinker
Katherine Van Dyck
Helen Van Dyck
Carrie B. Parks
Alice Mae Gray
Irma Castle Hanford
Maude Fulmore

DRAWING, 1.

Carolena Latzke
Elizabeth A. Gest
Fannie C. Storer
J. B. Kramer
Elizabeth Howard
Tyvonne Jequier
Marjorie Bishop
Charles A. McGuire, Jr.
Edna Youngs
Monica Samuels
Viola Ethel Hyde
Edith A. Roberts
Frances E. Hays
Irma Jessie Diescher
William Kreuter
Ruth E. Crombie
Isadore Douglas
Marjorie T. Hood
Marjorie Conner
Nina A. Wilkinson
Molly Wood
Melton R. Owen
Edward C. Trego
Joseph W. McGurk
Gladys Ralston Britton
Margery Bradshaw
Helen E. Jacoby
Walter S. Davis
Delia Farley Dana
Dorothy Freeman
Frances Keeline
Margaret Peckham
Sara D. Burge
Roger K. Lane
Elise Urquhart

DRAWING, 2.

Winifred Bishop
Philip S. Blanton
Constance Whitten
Fannie Taylor
Will Timin
Elizabeth B. Warren
Thomas Buel
Carl G. Werner
Thurlow S. Widger
Elizabeth Dunphy
Ethel Evans Smith
Mary Selma Tebault
Phoebe Wilkinson
Sidonia Deutsch
Lora O. Kramer
Meade Wildnick
Edgar Pearce
Louise Day Putnam
Edith Vernon Hoskinson
Eleanor Woodward
Aimee Vervalen
Mary Weston Woodman
Gladys Young
Elsa Putnam
Muriel M. K. E. Douglas
Virginia Lyman
Rita Wood
Harriet Park
Philip Little
Cantey Venable
Will Campbell
Elizabeth G. Bolles
Edith Gates
Florence Kenway
Helen de Veer

Evelyn Foster
R. E. Andrews
Margaret D. White
Harold Helm
Delmar G. Cooke
Mary L. Crosby
Margaret E. Nicholson
Dorothea M. Dexter
Harry Barnes
Dorothea Clapp
Elizabeth Otis
Helen Murphy
Albert Elsner
Edith G. Daggett
Katherine Forbes Liddell
Walter Holmes Cady
Beatrice Buel
John Carmen Herbst
Frances Raymond
Elizabeth Coolidge
Margaret C. Wilby
Elsa Pickhardt
Eleanor McLellan
Josephine F. Cooke
Rachel C. Rice
Charlotte E. Sennington
Helen Greene
Emma H. Thayer Ohl
Mary Hazelaine Fewsmith
Katherine Browning
Pauline G. Nancrede
Frieda Farrand Boynton
Marjory Stoneman
Bessie R. Wright

Mary Klauder
Robert O. Wunderlich

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1.

Caroline C. Everett
Joseph S. Webb
Kate S. Tillett
Camilla A. Moore
Henry Ormsby Phillips
C. Cavode Davis
Janette Bishop
Katheryn H. Baldwin
Margaret Wright
Elizabeth Depree
Gerald Haxton
Spencer Strauss
W. Logan
Morton Charnley Stone
Margaret Dressler
Josephine Johnson
Helen Dickinson
Eleanor McBirney
Floyd Godfrey
Violet Shepley
Philip H. Suter
Lillian Grant
Edward F. Dickinson
Frederick Eckstein
Madeline Dixon
Alfred King
Zelma Wagner
Fredericka Going
Josephine Eichbaum



BY PAULINE CROLL, AGE 17.

Charles Elliott
Esterdell Lewis
Marshie McKeon
James R. Randolph
Elizabeth Keeler
Georgina Wood
Katherine M. Keeler
Bessie Styron
Mary Clarke
Irene G. Farnham
Oronzio Maldarelli
Sylvia C. Thoesen
Tom Spangler
Ella Munsterberg
Mildred Eastey
Philip Jackson Carpenter
Carl Wetzel
Gilbert P. Pond
Herbert Moeller

Mary C. Shuford
James Ludlow Raymond
Steele Wotkins
Adelaide Montizambert
Raymond Hilliard
Wilfred R. Boyd
Katherine Taylor
Theodora Wheeler

PHOTOGRAPHS, 2.

Frances C. Reed
Juanita Emilie Field
Frank M. Bockoven
Grace Morgan Jarvis
Adele Mack
Grace Elizabeth Allen
Doris Franklyn
Eloise Gerry

Pauline W. Bancroft
Helen E. Bensel
Georgette Duysters
Janet Chesley
Marjorie Mullins
Harold W. Knowles
William G. Taussig
Helen E. Bensel
C. McGhee Tyson
Edith Chase
Marguerite Schley
Marjorie Browning
Dorothy Nevins
Grace R. Jones
Ruth Houston Caldwell
Louise Bertha Sloss
Laurence B. Lathrop
George Goldthwait
Charles J. Heidelberger
Arthur D. Fuller
Louise M. Haynes
Henry Hickman
Frederick S. Brandenburg

PUZZLES, r.

Eleanor Marvin
Marion H. Tuthill
Clara J. McKenney
Mary Williams Bliss
Henrietta Ferriss Freeman
Helen Ragsdale
Charles F. Rossire, Jr.
Gertrude Scholle
Marion Senn
Joseph Wells
Marguerite Hallowell
Marcus Clifford Miller
Doris Newberry
Helen M. Gaston
Scott Sterling
Nina H. Weiss
Dorothy Carr
Helen F. Carter
Florence Gordon
Elizabeth Clarke
Chester Ober

COMPETITIONS.

CHAPTER COMPETITION No. 2 CLOSES DECEMBER 31.

PRIZES FOR THE BEST CHAPTER ENTERTAINMENTS.

To encourage chapter formation and further to promote the aims and purpose of the St. Nicholas League the following prize offers are made to chapters already formed, and to those that may form in time to take part in the competition.

To the chapter that in October, November, or December of the present year shall give the most successful public entertainment, and devote the net proceeds to the best use, fifty dollars' worth of books, to be selected from The Century Co.'s latest published catalogue, which will be sent free on application.

To the chapter ranking second, as above, twenty-five dollars' worth of Century publications.

To the chapter ranking third, fifteen dollars' worth.

To the chapter ranking fourth, ten dollars' worth.

RULES FOR THIS COMPETITION.

1. The entertainment may be of any sort, provided that a majority of the features are selected from the ST. NICHOLAS magazine.

2. "The most successful entertainment" shall be understood to mean the entertainment realizing the largest net proceeds after legitimate expenses have been deducted.

3. The "best use" shall be understood to mean that most in accordance with the St. Nicholas League aims and purpose, and it may be educational, charitable, patriotic, or humane, or for the best advancement of the League itself as represented by the chapter giving the entertainment. It is not necessary that the sum realized be all devoted to one purpose. The matter is left entirely in the hands of each chapter, and a full report must be made to the League editor by the chapter president and secretary, and indorsed as correct by those to whom the money has been paid.

4. In all public announcements of the entertainment, and upon the printed programme, the chapter number and the name of the League must appear, as per following example:

Given by the St. Nicholas League,
Chapter No. ———
Of (Town), (State).

If the chapter has a name, the name should also appear.

5. Whenever practicable, it shall be allowable for chapters to obtain free use of hall, accessories, costumes, and any other form of contribution possible, in order to swell their net proceeds—in fact, to make any honest effort to reduce the expenses of giving the entertainment.

6. Where a dramatic entertainment is to be given the St. Nicholas League will, upon application signed by chapter president and secretary, send, postpaid, the "Book of St. Nicholas Plays,"

from which any play may be selected, said book to remain the property of the League for use in future entertainments, and must be returned, care of the Century Co., when the entertainment is over.

7. The report of each entertainment, with a copy of its programme, must be received by the League editor on or before January 3, 1903. The awards will be announced in the League department for March or April.

REMARKS.

This competition ought to result in a great deal of good for everybody. Whether the entertainment be dramatic, musical, recitative, a fair, or a combination of all, it cannot fail to result in much wholesome interest and pleasure, while the fund obtained, whether small or large, whether it obtains a prize or not, will be of benefit to whatever good purpose it be applied.

Do not let the fact that you live in a small town, or even in the country, discourage you in the undertaking. Many of the most successful and profitable chapter entertainments heretofore have been those given in small villages. Wherever there is a school there is a place for a chapter and a chapter entertainment. Badges and instruction leaflets will be sent upon request to all desiring to join the League and to organize chapters. It is not necessary to be a subscriber, but only a reader of the magazine, to belong to the League.

PRIZE COMPETITION No. 39.

THE St. Nicholas League awards gold and silver badges each month for the best poems, stories, drawings, photographs, puzzles, and puzzle-answers.

A SPECIAL CASH PRIZE. To any League member who has won a gold badge for any of the above-named achievements, and shall again win first place, a cash prize of five dollars will be awarded, instead of another gold badge.

Competition No. 39 will close December 30 (for foreign members December 25). The awards will be announced and prize contributions published in ST. NICHOLAS for March.

VERSE. To contain not more than twenty-four lines, and may be illustrated, if desired, with not more than two drawings or photographs by the author. Title, "Among my Books."

PROSE. Story, article, or play of not more than four hundred words. It may be illustrated, if desired, with not more than two drawings by the author. Title to contain the word "Hero." May be humorous or serious.

PHOTOGRAPH. Any size, mounted or unmounted, but no blue prints or negatives. Subject, "Pets," and must be taken especially for this competition.

DRAWING. India ink, very black writing-ink, or wash (not color), interior or exterior. Subject, "A Winter Scene," and the drawing must be from life.

PUZZLE. Any sort, but must be accompanied by the answer in full. PUZZLE-ANSWERS. Best, neatest, and most complete set of answers to puzzles in this issue of ST. NICHOLAS.

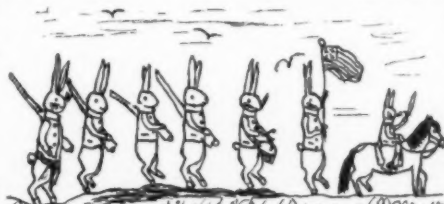
WILD-ANIMAL OR BIRD PHOTOGRAPH. To encourage the pursuing of game with a camera instead of a gun. For the best photograph of a wild animal or bird, taken in its natural home: First Prize, five dollars and League gold badge. Second Prize, three dollars and League gold badge. Third Prize, League gold badge.

RULES.

EVERY contribution, of whatever kind, must bear the name, age, and address of the sender, and be indorsed as "original" by parent, teacher, or guardian, who must be convinced beyond doubt that the contribution is not copied, but wholly the work and idea of the sender.

If prose, the number of words should also be added. These things must not be on a separate sheet, but on the contribution itself—if a manuscript, on the upper margin; if a picture, on the margin or back. Write or draw on one side of the paper only. A contributor may send but one contribution a month—not one of each kind, but one only. Address all communications:

THE ST. NICHOLAS LEAGUE,
Union Square,
New York.



"TAIL-PIECE." BY E. C. MALLISON, AGE 7.

BOOKS AND READING.

BOOKS FOR THE VERY YOUNG. BEFORE awarding the prizes for the best lists received in answer to the competition invited in the September number, let us say that we thank for their trouble all those who sent letters and lists of books. We shall use the lists in making up a general statement of some of the best books for young readers under ten years of age. All the work submitted was carefully examined and considered, and it was decided to award the three subscriptions of a year each to the following:

PRIZE-WINNERS.

1. ELIZABETH Q. BOLLES, Cambridge, Massachusetts; 2. HELEN C. COOMBS, St. Louis, Missouri; 3. E. H. GAYNER, Beech Holm, Sunderland, England.

The winning-lists follow in the order of the names as given, but no attempt has been made to decide in what order the three should rank—since they have been selected only as the best three submitted.

LIST NO. 1. E. Q. BOLLES.

Alice in Wonderland	<i>Lewis Carroll</i>
A Child's Garden of Verses	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i>
The Birds' Christmas Carol	<i>Kate Douglas Wiggin</i>
Greek Heroes	<i>Charles Kingsley</i>
Hans Brinker	<i>Mary Mapes Dodge</i>
King of the Golden River	<i>John Ruskin</i>
Little Lord Fauntleroy	<i>Frances Hodgson Burnett</i>
The Prince and the Pauper	<i>Mark Twain</i>
Water Babies	<i>Charles Kingsley</i>
The Wonder Book	<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne</i>

LIST NO. 2. H. C. COOMBS.

Little Lord Fauntleroy	<i>F. H. Burnett</i>
Lady Jane	<i>C. V. Jamison</i>
Dorothy Deane	<i>Ellen O. Kirk</i>
What Katy Did	<i>Susan Coolidge</i>
Tommy Anne and the Three Hearts	<i>Mabel Osgood Wright</i>
The Admiral's Caravan	<i>Charles E. Carryl</i>
Little Men	<i>Louisa M. Alcott</i>
The Story of a Bad Boy	<i>Thomas Bailey Aldrich</i>
Black Beauty	<i>Anna Sewall</i>
The Wonder Book	<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne</i>

LIST NO. 3. E. H. GAYNER.

The King of the Golden River	<i>John Ruskin</i>
At the Back of the North Wind	<i>George Macdonald</i>
The Wonder Book	<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne</i>
The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood	<i>Howard Pyle</i>
Water Babies	<i>Charles Kingsley</i>
Alice in Wonderland	<i>Lewis Carroll</i>
The Beechnut Book	<i>Jacob Abbott</i>
Mary's Meadow	<i>Juliana Horatia Ewing</i>
Carrots	<i>Mrs. Molesworth</i>
A Book of Verses for Children	<i>E. V. Lucas</i>

The selection of these three lists as prize-winners not only commended itself to the personal taste of the judges, but was due also to the fact that the books named in them seemed to be the most popular among the contestants.

In the January number we will make up a list of the best books for readers under ten years of age, basing the selection upon the votes of the contestants in this competition.

THE PURSE OF READERS OF fairy-tales do FORTUNATUS.

not need to be told of this wonderful, inexhaustible purse which was never empty, but could be shared with others without diminishing its contents. Did you ever realize that every good book is such a purse to the mind of the reader? You can draw riches of knowledge and thought from its pages, and yet find your treasure not only undiminished but even increasing. But the book is even the more valuable, for it is of use not only to its fortunate owner: it can be shared. Select some really good book and read it with some older friend. Read it slowly so that you may have time to talk of its contents. You will find that each of you discovers in its pages something the other did not see. Perhaps this is hard for younger readers to understand, and so it will be well to illustrate what is meant. Let us suppose that a sketch-class is drawing from a model in costume, and that the members of the class sit

around their model in a ring. Then every artist has a different view of the model, and makes a different drawing. Besides this, each artist finds something that particularly interests him, and, if he is a good artist, emphasizes this in his sketch. Even a single artist, by walking around the model, has a continually changing view. Now, in reading, the same thing is true. Each reader takes a different view of a story, and pays especial attention to certain points in it. By reading in company, and talking over a book as it is read, the readers find appreciation and knowledge of a book greatly increased.

"BETWEEN THE LINES." We often hear of "reading between the lines," but it is an expression young readers do not always understand, for it is not always used alike. Sometimes the phrase means finding in the words of the writing something that is not exactly said there, but something which the words imply. Sometimes it means discovering something in the mind of the writer, rather than in the words he has used. But there is still another way of reading between the lines, which may be used in reading a well-written book or piece of writing, and that is to complete and to fill in what the writer has merely touched upon or sketched out. This will be found an excellent way to study good literature, if you select the proper references for your work.

Lowell says:

As one who on some well-known landscape looks,
Be it alone or with some dear friend nigh,
Each day beholdeth fresh variety,
New harmonies of hills, and trees, and brooks —
So is it with the worthiest choice of books,
And oftenest read: if thou no meaning spy,
Deem there is meaning wanting in thine eye.

It is with true books as with Nature: each
New day of living doth new insight teach.

READING POETRY. YOUNG people, in buying Christmas presents of books, should not forget the claims of poetry. There is in verse a permanence of interest that makes it especially adapted for presents. You will find in the book-shops many excellent collections of good verse, such as the "Golden Treasury" of Palgrave, the "Children's Garland from the Best Poets" selected by Coventry Patmore, Palgrave's "Children's Treasury,"

Thacher's "Listening Child," "The Blue Poetry Book," "Lyra Heroica" by Henley, the collection named last in prize-list No. 3 above, the "Boy's Book of Battle Lyrics" by Thomas Dunn English, "Poems of American Patriotism" chosen by Professor Brander Matthews, "Book of Famous Verse" selected by Agnes Repplier, "Once upon a Time" by Mary E. Wilkins, and — ever so many more. Any one of these will be a Christmas gift that will outlast any story except the very, very best.

It is said that children do not love poetry until it has been read to them — to give them an idea of the music and swing of the lines; and let the reader remember to read a poem at a time when the subject of the poem has an especial claim upon the listener's attention.

"EVERY BOOK HAS INDEED, the choice of ITS DAY." — books to read is hardly more important than the selection of the right season for the reading. Would a wise book-lover select Whittier's "Snow Bound" as the fitting literary food for a broiling August afternoon? — or choose Scott's "Lady of the Lake" to read on a trip to Mexico, for instance? You will find that a book unwelcome at one time will be read with absorbing interest at another. And this is a matter upon which the cleverest of us may be glad of the advice of wiser if not older readers. It is a pity there are not "Reading Doctors" to prescribe the right reading at the right time for each of us.

"Doctor, my little boy is too sentimental and listless — not to say lazy. What ought he to read?" "My dear madam, let me recommend Dana's 'Two Years Before the Mast' and Roosevelt's 'Ranch Life.' He will find them excellent. And you'll find the new St. Nicholas book 'The Rincon Ranch' very good for him. Good morning, madam." "Doctor, my daughter is a little too much of a hoyden. Of course I like to see her jolly and full of life, but she is rather a tomboy. Can you suggest something that will quiet without tiring her?" "Let me see. Oh, yes. Possibly 'Lorna Doone,' in such doses as you may select, will bring a desirable change. There can hardly be a better friend for your daughter than Lorna."

Can you not imagine such a doctor for the mind doing great good to many a youngster?

THE LETTER-BOX.

LAHORE, PUNJAB, INDIA.

MY DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have had you for four years, but I have not yet written you a letter.

My mother has a school in the city, to which she goes every morning. I sometimes go with her. There are about seventy Mohammedan girls in the school.

Summer before last we went to Kashmir. There is a beautiful river there called the Jhelum, and part of the time we lived on it on boats. The boats were called *dongars*, and were covered with matting. I think that none of the St. NICHOLAS boys and girls ever saw such dirty people as the Kashmiris! Part of the time we were in tents back in the mountains on the edge of another river, called the Lidar. And sometimes we marched long distances. Coming out from Kashmir, we came by the road that the famous old kings of India made hundreds of years ago. It is very little used now. You can read about it in "Lalla Rookh." I rode a pony, but father and mother and two friends walked all the way, one hundred and fifty miles, a very rocky, steep road much of the way; but there is very beautiful scenery. We did about thirteen miles a day, and once twenty miles.

We live next door to the college of which my father is president. There are three hundred and fifty students—Mohammedans, Hindus, Parsees, Sikhs, and Christians.

I am nine and a half, and expect to go to a school in the Himalayas this year.

Yours sincerely,
NANCY SHERRARD EWING.

WEI HSIEN, CHINA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: One day in the spring a Chinese friend brought with him two little partridges and gave them to my sister and me. We fed them with grasshoppers and little worms. When they grew a little

larger so that they could look after themselves, we put them in with the pigeons, and in the morning we found the female one outside, pretty nearly frozen to death. It had been pecked by the pigeons and chased out. You see, it could n't fight them, like the male, who pecked them back. And when we found out that they could n't stay there we put them in with the rabbits; but they were worse still. They would kick them about with their hind legs, and chase them about the rabbit-house. My sister and I had been reading "Wild Animals I have Known," by Seton Thompson. We watched the partridges to see if they did the same things Redruff did. We saw that they took dust-baths each day, but they did not live long enough for us to learn much about their habits. One night we forgot all about them and left them outside, and the male was killed by a weasel. The female wandered about a few days in search of her mate, but when she could n't find him she disappeared, too, one night, and the next morning we found her feathers in the woodpile.

I am ten years old. Yours sincerely,
EDWARD N. CHALFANT.

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We are living in Lausanne, nearly on the top of the hill, so that we can see the lake very well. On a clear day you can see the snow-capped mountains, and once in a long while you can see Mont Blanc. This morning we had a nice view of the mountains; but the fog rose, and now you cannot see them at all.

One day, when I and my brother Spencer went to Ouchy, Spencer and I took a row on Lake Geneva. The lake is very deep, so deep that one yard from shore it is six feet deep. Your faithful reader,

RALPH BAKENBARD (age 10).

THE RIDDLE-BOX.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE NOVEMBER NUMBER.

A HOLIDAY PUZZLE. Fourth row, Election Day. 1. Valentine's Day. 2. Hallowe'en. 3. Nemean Games. 4. Lincoln's Birthday. 5. Victoria. 6. Christmas. 7. Labor Day. 8. Thanksgiving. 9. Mayday. 10. St. Patrick's Day. 11. New Year.

NOVEL ACROSTIC. Thanksgiving. 1. Era. 2. We. 3. Pa. 4. Do. 5. Tin. 6. Reba. 7. Sabre. 8. P. 9. Gap. 10. Sir. 11. Iris. 12. Eel. 13. Glee.

WORD-SQUARE. 1. Pope. 2. Ovid. 3. Pile. 4. Eden. 5. Mythological PRIMAL ACROSTIC. Pumpkin pie. 1. Prosper. 2. Ulysses. 3. Minotaur. 4. Pegasus. 5. Kore. 6. Io. 7. Nestor. 8. Pleiads. 9. Iris. 10. Eros.

CONCEALED ZIGZAG. Plum pudding. 1. Page. 2. Plan. 3. Unit. 4. Amid. 5. Pads. 6. Sure.

TO OUR PUZZLERS: Answers, to be acknowledged in the magazine, must be received not later than the 15th of each month, and should be addressed to ST. NICHOLAS Riddle-box, care of THE CENTURY CO., 33 East Seventeenth St., New York City.

ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER were received, before September 15th, from Joe Carlada—"M. McG."—Daniel Milton Miller—David A. Wasson—"The Thayer Co."—Jessie P. and Marion Butler—Grace H. Graef—Virginia S. McKenney—Mildred D. Yenawine—"Grandma Jones"—I. C. Bull—"Johnny Bear"—Amelia S. Ferguson—P. M. Stimson and T. A. Smith—Robert Porter Crow—Constance, Esther, and Clare—"Chuck"—Marie Hammond—Margaret C. Wilby—"Alli and Adi"—"Goose and Donkey"—Stella B. Weinstein—Lilian Sarah Burt—Marion and Adeline Thomas—Basco Hammond—Olive R. T. Griffin—Edward McKey Very—Dorothy A. Baldwin—Helen Adele Seelgman—No name—Katharine Hooper—Mary Ruth Hutchinson—Elsie W. Dignan.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER were received, before September 15th, from D. Cunningham, 1—G. E. Tucker, 1—E. Gretchen Warrick, 6—Anna Skinner, 3—R. Clausen, 1—F. M. Gifford, 1—M. Fitch, 1—D. Warrin, 1—P. Gardner, 1—H. R. Berry, 1—G. Walker, 1—I. Merrill, 1—Leslie Pierce, 7—Edith Myall, 7—Freddie I. Baruch, 5—Bertha Emerson, 9—Florence and Edna, 6—Marion and Nathalie Swift, 7—W. G. Rice, Jr., 2—G. C. Weber, 10—Robert Richardson, 4—D. L. Smith, 1—Walter E. Stead, 10—Marjorie Clare, 6—Carmelite McCahill, 10—George Tilden Colman, 8—T. King, G. Meesfelder, and I. Mason, 7.

ILLUSTRATED PRIMAL ACROSTIC. Thanksgiving. 1. Telephone. 2. Hammer. 3. Apples. 4. Nail. 5. Knife. 6. Sickle. 7. Grapes. 8. Ink. 9. Violin. 10. Iris. 11. Nest. 12. Gloves.

A NOVEMBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC. Good appetite. 1. Gallop. 2. Orange. 3. Orient. 4. Domin. 5. Alight. 6. Pawnee.

CENTRAL ACROSTIC. Pumpkin pie. 1. Apple. 2. Laugh. 3. Tamed. 4. Pipes. 5. Ankle. 6. Sting. 7. Pansy. 8. Sippy. 9. Stiff. 10. Freed.

A CENTRAL ZIGZAG. Thanksgiving. 1. Canter. 2. Inhale. 3. Thrash. 4. Sandal. 5. Banker. 6. Dispel. 7. Single. 8. Bright. 9. Canvas. 10. Drinks. 11. Gained. 12. Begins.

CONCEALED CENTRAL ACROSTIC. Witch hazel. 1. Newel. 2. Alive. 3. Antic. 4. Oscar. 5. Ethel. 6. Ashes. 7. Meant. 8. Dozer. 9. Irene. 10. Salve.



Christmas RIDDLE · BOX ·

DIAGONAL.

(Silver Badge, St. Nicholas League Competition.)

WHEN the following words have been rightly guessed, the diagonal (beginning at the upper left-hand letter and ending with the lower right-hand letter) will spell a plant that is popular at Christmas-time.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. The state of being magnetic. 2. A game. 3. To name. 4. A ship's officer. 5. Owners of rented houses. 6. Fraternal. 7. The forms required by good breeding. 8. The American crocodile. 9. To contend in words.

HOWARD HOSMER.

BEHEADED ZIGZAG.

(Gold Badge, St. Nicholas League Competition.)

WHEN the following words have been beheaded and curtailed, and the remaining words written one below another, the zigzag (beginning at the upper left-hand letter and ending with the lower left-hand letter) will spell the most welcome day of the year.

1. Behead and curtail surveys, and leave a metal receptacle. 2. Behead and curtail not identical, and leave a common article. 3. Behead and curtail in that place, and leave a pronoun. 4. Behead and curtail conceit, and leave to free. 5. Behead and curtail pale, and leave a pronoun. 6. Behead and curtail portals, and leave consumed. 7. Behead and curtail minute particles, and leave a masculine nickname. 8. Behead and

curtail to chatter, and leave a common rodent. 9. Behead and curtail employing, and leave iniquity.

T. LAWRASON RIGGS.

DOUBLE ZIGZAG.

(Gold Badge, St. Nicholas League Competition.)

1 . . . 3 .
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
* . . . *
2 . . . 4 .

CROSS-WORDS: 1. A blossom. 2. A masculine name. 3. Yearly. 4. A jewel. 5. A representation of a person. 6. To make dear. 7. Positively. 8. A feminine name. 9. A preparation of maize. 10. Revolves.

From 1 to 2, a poet; from 3 to 4, one of his poems.

PRISCILLA LEE.

STAR PUZZLE.

1
4 . . . 5
2 3

FROM 1 to 2, to stain; from 1 to 3, a fish; from 4 to 5, level; from 4 to 3, enemies; from 2 to 5, to try. The five inner letters will spell the name of common Mexican plants.

EDSALL RUST.

ADDITIONS.

ADD the same letter to all of the following words:

1. Add a letter to to wear, and make tired.
2. Add a letter to an oilstone, and make a sweet substance.
3. Add a letter to a metal, and make sarcasm.
4. Add a letter to a fish, and make sheltered from light and heat.
5. Add a letter to lofty, and make a reckoning.
6. Add a letter to chance, and make fortunate.
7. Add a letter to a nobleman, and make in good season.
8. Add a letter to peruse, and make alert.

The initial letters will spell the name of a distinguished painter.

A. W. CLARK.

CHARADE.

My first is very evil,
My last is often just;
My whole a part of grammar—
 You know its rules, I trust.

A. W. CLARK.

NOVEL DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

ALL of the words described contain the same number of letters. When rightly guessed and written one below another, the initial letters, reading downward, will spell the name of a historian and poet; and another row of letters, reading upward, will spell the hero of one of his poems.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. A fine house. 2. Blamed. 3. A tree or shrub bearing cones. 4. A public sale. 5. Not tied in bales. 6. Wise. 7. A skilful gymnast. 8. One who is fond of yachting.

AMELIA S. FERGUSON (League Member).

PROGRESSIVE NUMERICAL ENIGMAS.

1. We made a 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 exploration of the city, and paid our 9-10-11-12 when we came to the end of the last 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12.

2. I shall 1-2-3 the note as soon as I am 4-5-6-7, although it is not 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 for some days yet.

3. The guide quoted a 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, which said that no one should go through the 1-2-3-4 whose 5-6-7 was under the limit.

4. The rector said that the 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 could not be sold at 1-2-3 until his 4-5-6 became of 7-8-9.

5. This young 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 is not a 1-2-3-4, but

a woman, and her action was a chief 5-6-7-8-9-10 in the case.

6. This water is only 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. Ask 1-2-3-4 to 5-6-7-8 it over, please.

7. The farmer had a 1-2-3-4 of 5-6-7-8-9, but there was not a bit of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 among it.

8. I have an 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 that if I ever go to college I shall have to pay for my 3-4-5-6-7-8-9 1-2 manual labor.

CONCEALED CENTRAL ACROSTIC.

If you search through this nonsense for something concealed,

You will find the good cheer of December revealed.

CROSS-WORDS.

1. When once with my niece I crossed the equator, I got her a sweet little young alligator.
2. And if ever in Florence we happen to linger, She shall wear some red coral on each little finger.
3. I bought when I tarried at Como large pieces Of blue and green lava for ten little nieces.
4. When later I met the Mikado in Ghent, He gave me at parting a Japanese cent;
5. And said, "You will notice, although it looks new, 'T is soldered in places with mincemeat and glue."
6. "But don't give the cent to your niece if she's young— She may get the white arsenic glue on her tongue."
7. "And you'll find her unconsciously lying by spells, Till you cannot depend on a thing that she tells."
8. From such terrible danger I felt we must fly, So I sent him a sonnet and bade him good-by.

ANNA M. PRATT.

HEXAGONAL ZIGZAG.

1	.	6
2	.	7
3	.	8
4	.	9
5	.	10

CROSS-WORDS: 1. A pouch. 2. Pertaining to an area. 3. A strip of material used in binding up wounds. 4. A kind of East India herring. 5. A beast of burden. From 1 to 5 and from 6 to 10 spell a name very familiar to children.

CLARENCE A. SOUTHERLAND
 (League Member).





"WHEN LADY BETTY TOOK THE AIR."